

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT CHURCH.

CHAP. I. (Continued.)

Period IV. *From the departure of Israel out of Egypt, to the building of the temple, in the fourth year of Solomon king of Israel, 1 Kings vi. i. containing the space of 483 years.*

§ 20. SO soon as the days of mourning for Moses were over, God, to shew his great wisdom and tender care of his people, called Joshua to take the command of Israel*. He was a man of age and experience, who, thirty-nine years before this, viewed the land of Canaan; and he with Caleb were the only honest spies who had brought up a good report of it; wherefore they, of all that came out of Egypt, were alone spared, and had the honour to enter into that happy country. Being a constant minister and attendant of Moses, and having before commanded the armies of Israel against Amalek*, and being clothed with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, he was by all these things eminently fitted for this high trust. It is

VOL. II.

B

not

* A. N. 2491. Art. Chr. 2493.

* 2 Sam. xii. 9, 10.

not material to determine, who was the penman of the book named by him; whether Joshua himself, as seems most likely from chap. xxiv. 26. or some other holy prophet: 'Tis sufficient that the book is a part of the holy scriptures committed to, and carefully kept by the Jews, and by them faithfully delivered to us; as appears by the concurring testimony of Christ and his apostles, who owned and approved the same holy scriptures, as the church of the Jews did. It is thought the whole book contains a history of seventeen years; whereof seven were spent in completing the conquest of Canaan, which Joshua survived ten years, though this last part of the period not being determined in scripture, chronologers and critics differ about it. A question hath been moved, Why doth the Lord promise to Joshua, *From the wilderness and this Lebanon, unto the great river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea, toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast*^b, since the Israelites never possessed all these territories? *Answer*, That their possessions did not extend so far, is to be ascribed to their own negligence, disobedience to God, and breach of those conditions to which the promise was annexed^c; but though they never inhabited all the way to the Euphrates, yet their dominion did reach so far; for all those lands were tributary to Israel in King David and Solomon's time. God strengthened this great captain with a comfortable promise: *I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*; which is a lasting encouragement to the people of God in all ages, to go on in his service, and to be content with the dispensations of his providence^d. He also com-

manded

^b Josh. i. 4.^c Judges i. 28. ii. 20, 21.^d Heb. xlii. 3.

manded him to be strong and courageous, to observe the law of Moses, and meditate on it day and night; for though he had as much to do as any one man, yet nothing was to hinder him from this study: This law was to be the only rule of his private actions, and public administrations.

Joshua having received this charge, entered straight upon the execution of his office. In order thereto, he commanded the people to prepare victuals; for though the manna was given to supply their wants in the wilderness, yet they were allowed, when they had opportunity, to purchase other provisions^c; and they having now for some time been in a planted country, taken from the Amorites on the east-side of Jordan, they were there plentifully supplied with necessaries, and also furnished for their approaching march. He likewise ordered them to make ready to pass over Jordan in three days^d. Though he had neither pontoons nor a bridge of boats to carry them over that river, yet he trusted in the promise of God to conduct Israel. During these three days, the spies sent to Jericho might go and return. He charged the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, according to their promise under Moses's administration, to go over Jordan, and assist their brethren in the conquest of the land of Canaan; which they chearfully consented to do. Which should teach us to comply with the just and reasonable dictates of those whom God hath appointed to conduct us, especially when the same tends to promote the glory of God, and the safety of ourselves and others.

Joshua,

^c Deut. ii. 6, 23.

^d Josh. i. 14.

Joshua, to encourage the people in what they were further to do, and to understand the measures he was to take in the conquest of Canaan, sent out spies to view Jericho^a. The men sent, trusting to divine protection, ventured their lives in the enemy's country, but found none in the city to which they were sent willing to entertain them, save one Rachab an harlot. If she had once deserved that name, it is like she had repented of her bad practices. The king of Jericho being informed of the matter, caused the gates be shut, and search to be made for the men; but Rachab hid them, and said they were gone. This lie was her infirmity, which was graciously pardoned, and her faith amply rewarded. Pursuers were sent in quest of them; but in the mean time she let them down in a basket over the town-wall, upon their promise, that when the place should be taken, they would save her with her family, provided she hung a scarlet cord out at the window where they made their escape. The kind entertainment she gave to the spies proceeded from her faith, that God would give to Israel the land of Canaan in possession, otherwise her conduct toward her own king and country would have been blameable; but for her faith she was preserved, when Jericho was destroyed^b, and is set before us for a good example^c. She was afterwards married to Salmon, and is one of whom our Lord descended according to the flesh^d. The spies having lain three days, or a part of them hid in the mountains till the pursuers were returned, safely repassed Jordan, and acquainted Joshua with what had happened, saying, *Truly the Lord*
bath

^a Josh. ii. ^b Heb. ii. 31. ^c James ii. 25. ^d Matth. i. 5.

hath delivered into our hand all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us¹.

Joshua having received the report of the spies, caused all the host prepare for passing Jordan, which had then overflowed all its banks. It was then the time of harvest, that is, the barley-harvest; (which fell early in the spring in these hot countries) for the Israelites kept the passover at their first entrance into Canaan^m; and the melting of the snows, and the great rains in mount Lebanon, whence the river springs, caused it overflow at that time of the yearⁿ. The priests, who carried the ark upon their shoulders, were first to enter the river, and the people to follow. They need not fear to follow the sign of God's presence. 'Tis like the pillar of cloud which was with them through the wilderness, had now left them; but they had the promise of God, and the signs of his presence to assure them of safety. So soon as the priests carrying the ark had entered Jordan, the waters that came from above stood as an heap, and the waters from below falling off, gave Israel access to pass on dry ground; the priests with the ark going foremost, and the rest of the people, to shew their reverence to the sacred symbol of God's presence, marched after it, at two thousand cubits, or about a thousand yards distance. The ark, with the priests carrying it, staid in the channel of the river till twelve men carried each a stone out of the river, to be taken to their head-quarters that night; and other twelve stones were set up as a pillar in the channel of the water, when the river was low and clear, as a memorial of this wonderful passage. The priests

¹ Josh. ii. 24.

^m Josh. v. 10.

ⁿ 1 Chron. xii. 15.

priests with the ark being come to the shore, the river returned to its usual channel, and overflowed all its banks. The miracle is not only recorded in Joshua iii. and iv. but also frequently mentioned in other parts of scripture, as a monument of God's kindness to this people^o: And indeed it was very useful; first, To confirm Joshua's call to command, and to strengthen his authority among all Israel; assuring them, that God who wrought such wonders for them, would also put them in possession of the land of Canaan. Secondly, To mind them of that great miracle which God had done for their fathers forty years before, in their passing through the Red-Sea as on dry land. Thirdly, This wonderful passage being noised abroad, did fill the Canaanites with terror, and made the conquest of their country more easy to Israel. Fourthly, When the ark of the covenant went before them, the waters were stopped, which might teach the people, that it was only by the favour and assistance of God these great things were done for them; and that through his favour they were only to expect the performance of the rest of his promises. Finally, The monuments erected might teach them and all of us, to remember the wonders of mercy God hath done for us, especially our deliverance from hell and misery through Jesus Christ, and to teach them to our children, that they may love and serve the Lord.

Joshua being now encamped in the plains of Jericho, the numerous host of Israel made there a mighty show; *Who can count the dust of Israel?* The news were soon dispersed over all the country, which filled the Canaanites with fear; *their hearts melted,*

melted, neither was there spirit in them any more^p. which was a performance of the promise, *I will send my fear before thee*^q. When the country round about was in that consternation, God ordered Joshua to circumcise the children of Israel, their adversaries hearts and hands being weakened by fear, they could not take advantage of them as Simeon and Levi did against the Shechemites, to come against them *when they were sore*; and God having commanded his people to do it, he would no doubt protect them in obeying his precept. The people that came out of Egypt were circumcised, which, during the plagues on the Egyptians, the Israelites might have leisure to perform: But these that were born in the wilderness, especially after the second year after their deliverance, when they were sentenced to wander for their unbelief and disobedience, were yet uncircumcised, as a token of God's displeasure against them: But it must be now done, to teach them that God gave them the land of Canaan, upon account of his covenant, of which circumcision was a seal. Thus the Lord *rolled away the reproach of Egypt*. The Egyptians being then uncircumcised, reproached Israel with their bondage, and that for mischief the Lord had brought Israel into the wilderness, and had shut them in^r: But by this seal of the covenant they were owned to be God's free-born children, devoted to his service, whom he would bring into Canaan in triumph, and there perfect their salvation. For the like reasons they kept the passover at the time appointed by their law, the fourteenth day of the first ecclesiastical month, at the same place in Gilgal. When soldiers take the

^p Josh. v. 1. ^q Exod. xxiii. 7. ^r Exod. xiv. 3.

the field, they think themselves excused from religious exercises; but here Joshua opens his most successful campaign with one act of devotion after another, in the sight and defiance of the Canaanites: And hereby the Lord gives his people an instance of his performing that promise, That when they went up to keep their feasts, no man should disturb their land^f. Provision was made for their camp of the corn of the land, whereof they found enough in the barns of the Canaanites which they had abandoned: And hereon the Manna ceased, to teach them not to expect extraordinary supplies, when these may be had in an ordinary way.

Gilgal was but about two short miles from Jericho^g: From the camp, then Joshua might easily go out to view the city, to meditate and contrive how to attack it. Upon that occasion *he saw a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand*. He went to him, and, with holy courage, asked, *Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?* He answered, *Nay, but as a prince of the host of Jehovah am I now come*. Whereon Joshua fell down and worshipped him^h. The man who here appeared is no created angel, but the Son of Godⁱ, the same who promised to guide his people through the wilderness^j, comes now as a king with his sword drawn, to encourage Joshua, and to authorise him and the people to carry on the war with vigour; for he accepts of religious worship and adoration, which a created angel durst not admit of^k. He makes the place holy by his presence, which

^f Exod. xxxiv. 24. ^g Hieronymus de locis Hebraicis, Tom. 9. fol. m. 128. ^h Josh. v. 13, — 15. ⁱ See the Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church against the Unitarians, page 234. ^j Exod. xxiii. 20, 21. ^k Rev. xxii. 8, 9.

which is God's prerogative, is called Jehovah^x, a name incommunicable to any creature. Upon this encouragement, under the command and direction of God, Jericho was vigorously attacked. Joshua had no battering-rams, nor other engines to bring down the walls; but the Lord ordered him to cause all the forces to march round the city, with seven priests before the ark, bearing trumpets of rams-horns, six days successively; and on the seventh day, when they made a long blast with the rams horns, or the trumpets whereby they sounded the jubilee, the wall of the city should fall down flat, and the people ascend every man straight before him. This method was used to shew that their success did not proceed from their own valour or skill, but merely from God's appointment and blessing; and that we are not to judge of divine institutions by mere carnal reason. He can do what he pleaseth by the most contemptible means. The orders being obeyed, on the seventh day the walls of the city fell down; the Israelites entered, and put to the sword all the men, women and children, and the very beasts, sparing only Rahab, and these in her house, conformable to the promise made by the spies. Then they burnt the town and all that was in it, except gold and silver, with the vessels of brass and iron, which being purified by fire, as in a preceding case^y, were put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. 'Tis not to be doubted but that the heathenish idols found there were utterly destroyed, conformable to the law^z. If the Israelites had not done all this execution by virtue of a

VOL. II.

C

divine

^x Josh. vi. 2. ^y Numb. xxxi. 22, 23. ^z Deut. vii. 25.

divine warrant, under the seal of miracles, it could not have been justified; nor can it justify the like now, when we are sure no such warrant can be produced. But being appointed by the righteous Judge of heaven and earth, who is not unrighteous in taking vengeance, they are to be applauded as faithful ministers of his justice. The city was a cherem, an accursed thing; none of the spoil thereof was to be taken by the army, lest the soldiers being glutted thereby, should grow sensual and sluggish in their work; and that by this destruction a greater terror might be struck upon the rest of their enemies. But the spirit of the gospel is quite different; for Christ *came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them*^a. A curse was denounced against the very man that rebuilt the city of Jericho^b, which was accomplished in Hiel the Bethelite^c. But we are not to think that this curse reached the city itself, nor these who did afterwards inhabit it; for we find it was honoured not only by the presence of these great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, but also of our Saviour himself^d.

This being done at Jericho, Joshua sent a detachment of 3000 men to seize on the next city in their way, which was Ai; but the Lord suffered the Israelites to be put to the flight, with the loss of thirty-six men, because Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, who had taken of the spoil of Jericho that was accursed, a Babylonish, or garment of Shinar, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, which he hid in the earth, in the midst of his tent^e. This sin gave an interruption

^a Luke ix. 56. ^b Josh. vi. 26. ^c 1 Kings xvi. 34. ^d Matth. xx. 29.
^e Luke xix. 1. ^f Josh. vii.

ruption to the progress of their arms, and embarrassed their affairs. The hearts of the people melted not so much for the loss, as because this did harden the Canaanites, and evidence God's displeasure against Israel. Joshua rent his clothes, and humbly interceded for Israel, and that the Lord would not suffer his holy name to be dishonoured among the Gentiles. In answer to this address, the Lord, 'tis like, from the oracle before the ark, shewed that the people could not stand before their enemies, because of the accursed thing among them, and directed them how to discover and punish the guilty person. According to this order, Joshua rose early next morning, and discovered by casting of lots, Achan to be guilty; who having, after a grave admonition, confessed his crime; and the concealment being found, he was stoned to death, and all that he had was burnt. His children being it seems accessory to the guilt, and the punishment being inflicted by the command of God, for the terror of others, cannot be counted unjust. They lose their own that grasp at more than their own, like the eagle in the fable, which stole flesh from the altar, but brought a fiery coal with it, which burnt her nest.

This embarrassment being over, God encouraged and directed Joshua how to take Ai, and to do to it as he had done to Jericho, only the spoil and the cattle Israel were allowed to take for a prey to themselves. They need not call a council of war, who had God so near to give them counsel in every case. Joshua marched against the city, with thirty thousand forces, leaving five thousand of them in ambush betwixt Ai and Bethel. The king of Ai, with his confederates sallying out, Joshua

Joshua seemed to give way; and his adversaries pursued him. When they were gone far from the city, the Israelites, who lay in ambush, marched into the town, and set fire to it; which Joshua observing, he faced about, and charged his enemies, and cut them in pieces. The king of Ai was taken and hanged, all his people destroyed, their city burnt, and entirely overthrown, only the cattle and spoil Israel took for a prey^c. The spoil Israel had brought out of Egypt, by borrowing from their neighbours, was much of it expended on the tabernacle reared up in the wilderness, for which they are now reimbursed with interest; for what was here, or at the like occasions, taken, was probably divided by Joshua in due proportions. God is a God of order, not of confusion. The stratagem used was lawful and good, being appointed of God. There was no league, oath nor promise broken, only military art used, of which their adversaries ought to have taken care. Joshua, after taking Ai, being not far from the mounts Gerizim and Ebal, minded the command of Moses^d concerning the reading the law, with the blessings and curses thereto annexed, from these mountains; and amidst his successful conquests, took time for this religious solemnity, the Lord taking a watchful care that his people, while about his service, should be safe in the heart of an enemy's country. He caused erect an altar of unhewn stones upon mount Ebal, to signify, that in that place where the curses were denounced, by the sacrifice of our Redeemer, we may have peace with God^e; and by the sacrifices there offered, he gave God the glory of his victories.

^c Josh. viii. ^d Deut. xi. 29. and xxvii. 1.—13. ^e Gal. iii. 13.

ries. The law, or, 'tis like, only the ten commands, which are a sum of the whole, was writ on stones, that every one might read them; and the whole law, with the blessings and curses was publicly read before a great assembly of all the tribes.

All the people of that country, namely, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, hearing of the success of the Israelites against Jericho and Ai, joined in a league to defend themselves. But the Gibeonites sent messengers to Joshua, who pretending to come from a far country, prevailed on him and the heads of the tribes to covenant with them. We do not read of any king then in Gibeon; had the government been in a single person, he might probably been too proud to yield, but would have joined with the rest of the kings against Israel; but the affairs here being managed by four confederated cities, Gibeon, Cephirah, Beeroth and Kirjath-jearim¹, they had a greater regard to the common safety, than to their own personal dignity. Joshua coming into their country, three days after the league was concluded, discovered the fraud; yet being bound by the oath of alliance, would not permit them to be killed, but condemned them to cut wood and draw water for the place the Lord should appoint for his worship, to which they submitted.

Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem, hearing of the progress of Joshua's arms, sent unto Hotham king of Hebron, to Biram king of Jarmuth, to Japhia king of Lachish, and to Debir king of Eglon, inviting all of them to make war against Gibeon, because that city had made peace with Israel², where-

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¹ Josh ix. 17. ² Josh. x.

on these five kings joined against it. The Gibeonites on the other hand begged aid of Joshua: And he was so faithful to the alliance made with them, though fraudulently obtained, that he would not sit still to see them ruined, but marched speedily to attack these kings, who had invested their city, the Lord encouraging him to this undertaking; and accordingly he overthrew them with a great slaughter, putting them to the flight. Heaven assisted him; for a shower of hail-stones fell upon his enemies, which killed more than were slain with the sword. They had worshipped the host of heaven, giving that glory to the creature which was due to the Creator, and now the host of heaven fought against them. Joshua with strong faith and fervent prayer sought a miracle, which no doubt God allowed him to do; for the petition had not been granted by divine power, if it had not been dictated by divine grace. *Then spake Joshua to the Lord, in the sight of Israel, Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon staid, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it, or after it^k.* 'Tis the observation of Laur. Codomanus^l, That since both the sun and the moon were seen in the horizon near together, the moon was then decreasing; and since both stood, their stay could make no alteration in astronomical calculations. The God of nature can easily stop the course of nature for a whole day; which, if

^k [cf. x. 12,—14. ^l Apud Usserium in annalibus, p. 23.

if it be supposed in the middle of summer, when the day in that country is about fourteen hours between sun and sun, then this day would be twenty-eight hours in length. The miracle is mentioned in other parts of scripture^m. Nor is there any ground to question it, because heathen authors make no mention thereof; for we have no heathen writer before Homer, who is about eight hundred years after Joshua. Neither need we enquire at what time of the day this stop of the luminaries happened? Only since Joshua then pursued his enemies towards Makkedah to the west, and meantime saw the sun over Gibeon, and Ajalon to the east, the miracle seems to have been some hours before noon. 'Tis said to be *written in the book of Jasher*, which was some historical piece as well as the book of the wars of the Lordⁿ, or some collection of state poems; which not being canonical, is now lost, without any prejudice to our faith. *There was no day like that, before it, or after it*; that is, in these parts of the world; and therefore we are not to compare it with the length of time the sun appears above the horizon to these who live near the north and south poles. Nor doth the length of the day in Hezekiah's time, when the sun, at his prayer, went back ten degrees in the dial of Ahaz, appear to be greater; for those degrees might be but half-hours, or quarters. The sun might return these ten degrees more quickly than he went down; and it is safer to believe scripture-assertion, than to deny or question it upon mere conjectures. The reason given for the miracle, is, *Until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.* And it

^m Hab. iii. 11. ⁿ Numb. xxi. 14.

it may further signify, first, That God would magnify Joshua as a favourite of heaven, and as a type of our Jesus, who hath all power in heaven and earth. Secondly, He would hereby notify to the world, what he was doing for his people Israel. Thirdly, He would convince idolaters that the sun and moon, which they worshipped, were subject to the command of the God of Israel. Fourthly, That in the latter days, the Sun of righteousness would appear, and remove the darkness of pagan idolatry, by a long lasting day of gospel-light. Fifthly, That at the end of the world, the sun should be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood.

Joshua having got a long day to pursue his enemies, the five kings before mentioned were shut up in a cave at Makkedah, and upon the return of the army hanged. Then he took possession of three of the royal cities of those kings conquered in the field; namely, Lachish, Eglon and Hebron; the other two, viz. Jerusalem and Jarmuth, were not taken at this time; but he reduced three other great cities, Makkedah, Libnah, and Debir, utterly destroying the inhabitants. Thus the southern parts of the land of Canaan were subdued; most of which were afterwards possessed by the tribe of Judah. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, returned to their head-quarters at Gilgal in triumph^o. These things seem to have been done in the first year of Joshua's government. After the harvest of this year the Israelites began to labour their new conquests^p: And hence the computation of the sabbatical years is to be reckoned.

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^o Josh. x. 15.—43. ^p Usserii Annales, p. 23.

The conquests of the northern parts of Canaan took a longer space*: For it is said, *Joshua made war a long time with all those kings*^a; that is, six years, as is computed by Primate Usher and others. The Canaanites were the aggressors, God hardening their hearts to begin the war, that Israel might be justified beyond exception in destroying them. Jabin, king of Hazor, was at the head of the confederacy, and prevailed with all his neighbouring potentates to join in the war, with horses and chariots very many, as the sand on the sea-shore for multitude; whereby they had an advantage over Israel, whose army consisted only of foot, and were not allowed to bring horses and chariots into the field. Josephus^r tells us, that the army of the Canaanites consisted of three hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and twenty thousand chariots. Whatever their number was, the Lord encouraged Joshua, saying, *Be not afraid of them: for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.* Which was ordered, that the Israelites might not fear them now, nor use them hereafter. Upon this encouragement Joshua came upon them suddenly, at the waters of Merom, or Semechonite Lake, lying to the north, in the course of Jordan; where he obtained the honour of a complete victory, chased his enemies unto great Zidon, and Misrephoth-maim, houghed, or ham-stringed their horses, and burnt their chariots. After the victory, Joshua took Hazor, killed the king thereof, and all the inhabitants with the edge of the sword, and burnt their city with

VOL. II. D fire.

* A. M. 2503 Ant. Chr. 1447.

^r Antiq lib 5, cap. 1. p. 140.

^a Josh. xi. 18.

fire. He seized also the cities of the rest of the kings that had opposed him, destroyed their inhabitants, took the cattle and the spoil for a prey, as a stock wherewith to set up in the land of Canaan; but burnt not their towns, for God had promised to Israel, that they should *dwell in great and goodly cities which they builded not*¹. Thus all the land of Canaan was subdued; there was not a city that made peace with Israel, save those of the Gibeonites; all the rest they took in war. The Anakims, those formidable giants in Hebron, Debir and Anab, and in the mountains, were destroyed; there was none of them left, except in the land of the Philistines, and the land enjoyed peace. The promises given to Moses relating to the conquest being all performed; it is not to be doubted, but some of the Canaanites, hearing of the destruction of their brethren, might flee to the neighbouring parts of Tyre and Zidon; which being trading cities, they might thence take shipping for some part of Afric. And we have an inscription in Procopius², which he says was found on an ancient monument, that favours this conjecture: *ἡμεῖς εἰσμεν οἱ φυγόντες ἀπὸ προσώπου Ἰησοῦ τῷ ληστῇ υἱῷ τῷ Ναυῇ*; that is, *We are those who have fled from the face of that robber, Jesus, the son of Nave.*

The twelfth chapter of Joshua contains a summary of Israel's conquest, both on the east and west side of Jordan; which comes in as a conclusion of the history of the wars of Canaan, and also as a preface to the dividing that country, that we may see at one view what they were to make distribution of. Israel conquered thirty-one kings in

¹ Deut. vi. 10.

² De bello Vandalico, lib. 2. cap. 16.

in all: And here we may remark, first, what a fruitful country Canaan then was, that could subsist so many kingdoms, and yet, at this day, it is one of the most barren and despicable parts of the world, as an effect of the curse of God it lies under, since the Jews crucified the Lord of Glory, and rejected his gospel, which was foretold by Moses¹. Secondly, What narrow limits mens ambition was then confined to; those kings satisfied themselves, each of them with the government of one city, with its towns and villages; yet they were absolute in their power, having all their subjects as slaves at command. Thirdly, The wise and kind providence of God, which so governed the minds and hearts of the Canaanites, that they did not all join their counsels and forces together to oppose the Israelites at their first entrance, which interest obliged them to; but quietly suffered the destruction of their brethren, thereby preparing the way for their own, and giving victory to Israel, *that they might observe God's statutes, and keep his laws*². *He gave their land for an heritage, even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever*³.

Joshua being old and stricken in years, the Lord instructed him concerning what part of the land was yet to be conquered, which was necessary for him and the people to know, that they might admire the goodness of God in what he had done, and designed to do for them, that they might not make any dangerous league with those heathen neighbours, nor learn their way, but might hold themselves in a readiness to go against them, though
Joshua

¹ Deut. xxix. 22,—25. ² Psal. cv. 45. ³ Psal. cxxxvi. 17,—22.

Joshua should not live to see it. He also ordered him to divide the land Israel was already possessed of, among the tribes by lot; which was accordingly done ^w. This κληρονομία, or division, may, 'tis like, not be so entertaining to some readers; yet the Lord saw fit to insert it in sacred record, to illustrate the performance of the promise made to the fathers, that this land should be given to the seed of Jacob, to prevent any dispute afterwards about their limits, that the land might not be transferred from tribe to tribe, since they might still appeal to this distribution; and it is a piece of sacred geography that is very useful to understand the holy scriptures. The limits of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, on the east side of Jordan, we have already noticed ^x noticed. Levi got no inheritance among the tribes, the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance ^y: They had a share of the sacrifices to feed on, and also their Levitical cities, with their suburbs (scattered up and down Canaan for convenient instructing the people) with their tithes, and first-fruits; as hath been before ^z observed. So that, though they were dispersed, yet they were liberally provided. Caleb, who, forty-five years before this, had been one of the two faithful spies, that had brought up a good report of the land; and though now eighty-five years old, and more aged and venerable than any in the camp except Joshua, yet his strength was not abated, demanded Hebron, as his share in the distribution, the same being promised to him by Moses long ago. His desire being found reasonable, was granted: *Joshua blessed him,*

^w Josh. xiii. — xxi. ^x See Vol. I p 390, — 394. ^y Numb. xviii. 20.
^z Josh. xiii. 33. ^z See Vol. I. p 335, &c.

him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance.——Because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel^a.

I shall not endeavour to describe the particular towns and territories assigned to each tribe: The curious may consult what learned men^b have wrote on this subject. The tribe of Judah had their lot (which was not fortuitous, but ordered by Providence) to the south^c. Their territories were large; for this was a numerous tribe, in which the sceptre, royal dignity and government of the Jews were for a long time fixed. The children of Ephraim had their lot to the north of Judah, being bounded with Jordan to the east, and and the Mediterranean sea to the west^d. The tabernacle was fixed at Shiloh^e, a city belonging to this tribe, but close upon the lot of Benjamin. There it remained for about three hundred and fifty years, till the sins of Eli's house forfeited that favour, and ruined the city^f. 'Tis like Shiloh was chosen as the seat of the ark after the first settlement in Canaan; because Joshua, who was then alive, was of that tribe, and it was fit he should be near it. The word Shiloh also denotes the peaceableness of the land at that time. To the north of Ephraim lay the portion of the half-tribe of Manasseh, on the west side of Jordan. When the posterity of Joseph desired a greater extent of land, Joshua bade them work and fight for it, cut down the woods, and destroy the Canaanites that were

^a Josh. xiv. 13, 14 ^b Masius in Josuam, Relandi Palestina, & de urbibus & vicis Palestinae, Critica Lond. & Poli, Hieronymus de locis Hebraicis, Wells's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 2. Fuller's Pisgah Sight, Adrichomii Descriptio terræ sanctæ, Raleigh's History, part 1. book 2. chap. 7.—13. Dr Patrick, &c. ^c Josh xv. ^d Josh xvi. ^e Josh. xviii. ^f 1 Sam. iii. iv. vii. 1. Psal lxxviii 60. Jer. vii. 12.

were left among them ^e. Three men out of each tribe were appointed to divide the remainder of the country among the seven tribes yet unprovided for ^b. Josephus ⁱ says, these arbiters had some people skilled in geometry with them, and they took seven months to divide the land, and report their opinion in writing to Joshua at Shiloh. And if we consider what they had to do, that the land was newly conquered, and many Canaanites in it to way-lay them, it may be allowed that their work required time and pains. The lot of Benjamin lay between Judah to the south, Ephraim to the north, Jericho and Jordan to the east, and went near the Mediterranean sea on the west. Though their borders were narrow, yet their land was fruitful, and had twenty-six considerable cities. The inheritance of the tribe of Simeon is described by their cities; because these were for most part within, or on the skirts of the portion of Judah, whose abundance did supply the want of others. The lot of the tribe of Zebulon ^j was washed by the Mediterranean or Great Sea on the west, and by the sea of Tiberias or lake of Galilee on the east; answering Jacob's prophecy, *Zebulon shall be for a haven of ships* ^k; trading ships on the Mediterranean, and fishing-boats or ships on the sea of Galilee. In the territories of this tribe our Saviour preached many sermons, and wrought many miracles. The lot of Issachar run from Jordan to the east, to the Mediterranean sea on the west, and from the tribe of Manasseh to the south, to that of Zebulon on the west. The tribe of Asher lay upon the coast of the Mediterranean sea: And adjoining

^e Josh. xvii. ^h Josh. xvii. 4.—9. ⁱ Antiq. lib. 5. cap. 1. p. m. 141.
^j Josh. xix. 10.—16. ^k Gen. xlix. 13.

joining to it were the famous seaport-towns of Tyre and Zidon, which still remained in the hands of the heathen. The tribe of Naphtali lay to the north, and bordered upon mount Lebanon. Finally, the lot of the tribe of Dan was between the land of the Philistines on the west, Judah on the east, Ephraim on the north, and Simeon on the south. Providence ordered this powerful tribe to a post of danger, as best able to deal with the Philistines: And so it was found in the case of Samson. When they had made an end of dividing the land, Joshua was last served, to shew that he sought the good of his country, and not his own private interest. Timnath Serah, in the mountainous Ephraim, was assigned to him; where he built a city¹, and dwelt to the day of his death.

The appointing of cities of refuge was ordered by the law of Moses^m to be done when they came into Canaan: Now when the Lord had given them rest, Joshua named these cities, to protect such as were guilty of casual murderⁿ. There were six of them, placed at convenient distances, for the unfortunate person to flee unto, and were all cities of the Levites; whereby an honour was put on that tribe, to judge in this critical case: And since those who fled thither were not allowed to go up to the house of the Lord, it was well they had Levites at hand to instruct and pray for them. All the tribes being provided for, the Levites put in their claim; and without delay, forty-eight cities, with their suburbs, dispersed among the several tribes, were assigned to them^o. The maintenance of ministers is not an arbitrary thing, that people

¹ Josh. xix. 50. ^m See Vol. I. p. 359. ⁿ Josh. xx. ^o Josh. xxi.

people may let them starve if they please : No ; as the God of Israel commanded the Levites should be provided for, so our Redeemer, the King of the Christian church, hath decreed by a perpetual ordinance, *that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel*."

The two tribes of the Reubenites and Gadites, with the half-tribe of Manasseh, who dwelt on the east side of Jordan, having served as auxiliaries during all the wars of Canaan, at least a quota of forty thousand of them ; the war being now ended with glorious success, Joshua^a dismisseth them, with riches, cattle, silver and gold, the spoil of the Canaanites, as their pay, for the use of their own families and that of their brethren. He gave them a good character, for their faithful service, and good counsel, To take heed to the law, to keep the commands of the Lord, to cleave to him, and serve him with all their heart and soul ; and sent them away with his kind blessing. At their departure they erected a great altar near the river Jordan. If they had consulted the oracle of God before setting up this altar, and explained their purpose to their brethren, as they did afterwards, this might have prevented a misunderstanding, which, at first view, had a dangerous aspect. For the children of Israel, to the west of Jordan, conceiving the two tribes and a half designed by what they had done, to rebel against the Lord, and to set up a separate worship from that of the tabernacle at Shiloh, resolved on a war against them : But before they would draw their swords, they sent the princes of the chief houses, and with them Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, (the same who

^a 1 Cor. ix. 14.

^a Josh xxii.

who had done justice in the matter of Peor) as ambassadors to reason the matter. To whom the two tribes and a half made a calm apology, appealing to the heart-searching God, that it was not out of any design to rebel against the Lord, nor to depart from the worship appointed at Shiloh, nor to break the unity of the church, that they had erected this altar; but only to be a witness, that their posterity, in process of time, might not, by reason of their distance, be counted strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. With which answer the commissioners from the nine tribes and a half, and the whole congregation rested satisfied; and so the war was prevented.

Some time after this, when Joshua was grown old, and saw death approaching, he made two farewell sermons to the people of Israel; wherein he endeavoured to entail on them and their posterity a sense of religion and their duty to God, ever to be mindful of his covenant, and to beware of familiarity with idolaters, as they would not bring down the wrath of God upon themselves and their posterity after he had done so great things for them. Having yet a longer space given him, he convened the tribes again at Shechem, which lay near him, now that he was old, and unfit for travel: Where he took great care to confirm the people in the faith and worship of the true God, that after his death they might persevere therein; he recounted the great things God had done for them and their fathers, and gave them a charge to serve and worship a holy and jealous God, by making a deliberate and determinate choice of him, to which they might ever

VOL. II. E adhere;

adhere; and concluded his exhortation with a solemn covenant, by putting it in writing, calling witnesses, and setting up a great stone as a memorial thereof for the benefit of posterity. After these things, Joshua the servant of the Lord died, being an hundred and ten years old *: And they buried him in the borders of his own inheritance, in Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim. About the same time the bones of Joseph were interred in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor. This patriarch, when a-dying in Egypt, about two hundred years before, gave *commandment concerning his bones*, that they should not rest in their grave till Israel had rest in the land of promise. Therefore the Israelites brought his coffin out of Egypt, carried it along with them in all their marches, by the care, 'tis like, of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, who descended of him, and now buried it in that piece of ground which his father gave him near Shechem *. At the same time died Eleazar the high priest, and was buried in a hill which pertained to Phinehas his son and successor. And here ends the book of Joshua.

§ 21. It is not very certain, whether Samuel, Ezra, or some prophet was the penman of the book of Judges; nor is it of great moment to know: For it is no great matter who was the king's secretary, or with what pen a decree was written, if it be sure that it was done by the king's order. We know that to the Jews were committed *the oracles of God* †, that is, the holy scriptures of the *Old Testament*, of which this is a part by the confession

* A. M. 2513. Ant. G. 1437

† Gen. xlviii. 22. † Rom. iii. 2.

confession of all parties : And that the Jews did not betray their trust, but kept these sacred books themselves, and delivered them to the world entire, we are assured ; because neither Christ nor his apostles, who reprove them for mistaking the meaning of some passages of scripture, ever charge them for perfidy about the Canon. It is called the book of Judges, because in it we have the history of the commonwealth of Israel for about three hundred years, under all the judges that governed Israel, except Eli and Samuel ; who giving occasion to the change of the government, their affairs are narrated in another book. These judges were a sort of magistrates, who could neither make new laws, nor impose tribute ; but were supreme executors of God's law, and generals of the armies of Israel. Under them the people were very corrupt, and sadly oppressed by their heathen neighbours, and made no figure proportionable to their glorious entry into the land of Canaan. However, we hope, the face of religion was then kept up : Though too many turned to idolatry, yet the tabernacle-service was maintained, and many attended it. Indeed the historian mainly records provocations and grievances, the disturbances that happened, and the peace that was restored by deliverers raised up of God, as an instance of a theocracy, the Lord's keeping the reins of government in his own hands ; and does not insist upon every thing our curiosity may lead us to expect.

We have an account of what progress the several tribes made in driving out the Canaanites, in the first chapter of Judges. Joshua had done so much in this affair, that they might easily have perfected it, had they not been wanting to themselves.

selves. The children of Judah, with the assistance of Simeon their brother, by the direction of God went up first; *and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hand, and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.* They not only fought God's counsel, but they gave him the praise of the victory. Such acknowledgements are scarce to be met with in heathen writers: And it is to be wished that such religious expressions go not into disuse in our days. Adonibezek, the king of the country, was taken prisoner. He had been a cruel tyrant, having cut off the thumbs and toes of seventy kings, and forced them to gather meat under his table: And Providence ordered that he should be served in the same manner, that his sin might be writ in his judgment. The tribe of Judah also took Jerusalem. Joshua had killed the king thereof^t, but the city seems not to have been taken till this time. They smote *it with the edge of the sword, and set it on fire.* 'Tis like they did this in detestation of idolatry, with which it had been very much infected: And though the fire consumed many parts of it, yet habitations might be left for as many as they had to put in possession thereof. They also took Debir, Hormah, Gaza, and Hebron: The last of these cities had been given by Joshua, ten years ago, to Caleb; but now he is put in the thorough possession thereof, and the giants in these bounds were cut off. The city Debir was before named Kirjath-sepher, that is, the city of books. Some take it to have been a kind of academy. Caleb promised his daughter Achsah to him that would smite it. Othniel the son of Kenaz gained the town and the lady, and by

^t Josh. x.

by her management with her father, got a good inheritance to himself and his family^u. The Kenites, who were of the posterity of Jethro, father-in-law to Moses, got a settlement in the tribe of Judah. The tribe of Simeon also gained ground of the Canaanites: Yet Judah failed in courage, and did not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron; though by the assistance of the God of Israel, they might have destroyed them, and given a noble example to the rest of their brethren. The house of Joseph had success against Beth-el: But the rest of the tribes did meanly; for they destroyed not the Canaanites nor the Amorites, only made them tributary.

Though Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and of the elders that outlived him, who had seen the works of the Lord^v; yet they soon degenerated, and made a league with the inhabitants of the land. For which the angel of the Lord sharply admonished them, even the Angel of the covenant, who is Jehovah; and spoke to them in his own name^w, telling them that these nations shall be *as thorns in their sides, and their gods a snare unto them*. Upon this message *they wept*; they relented, crying out against their own folly and ingratitude, and called the name of the place Bochim, a place of weeping, and *they sacrificed there unto the Lord*. Being, as is supposed, met at Shiloh, where was God's altar, there they offered sacrifice, to turn away his wrath, and obtain his favour; to dedicate themselves to him, and to make a covenant by sacrifice. Nevertheless they did

^u Judges i 11,—13. Josh xv. 16,—19.

^w Judges ii.

^v Josh xxiv. 31.

did not sincerely reform : For when that generation who lived with Joshua were gathered to their fathers, there arose another generation after them who knew not the Lord, nor the works he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim. [The word is in the plural, to signify many idols bearing this name*.] And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. For these things the anger of the Lord was hot against them, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers : Yet in his great pity he raised up deliverers. But when the judge was dead, they returned to idolatry : Wherefore the Lord put a stop to their good success, and sent upon them new calamities. The five Lords of the Philistines, who commanded five maritime towns, named Ashdod, Askelon, Gath, Gaza and Ekron, who were never fully subdued till the reign of king David, were their oppressors, who ensnared them into sin, and then became their enemies. Besides, Israel dwelt among the Sidonians, the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites ; they made intermarriages with them, forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves to their own ruin.

Their first oppressor after Joshua's days, was Cushan Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia ; the Lord, for their sin, sold them into his hands ; and Israel served him eight years*. We might know more of the genealogy and history of this prince, if there were any profane history of these times : But

* See Remarks concerning Baal in the History of the Propagation of Christianity, Chap. 2. † Judges iii 8,—11.

But that is not now to be had, only it appears by the sacred text, that he was king of Mesopotamia or Aram-Nahorajim, between the two great rivers of Tigris and Euphrates, the same country where Laban, Jacob's father-in-law, once dwelt. Cushman, endeavouring to enlarge his dominions, came all the way to Canaan, and there oppressed Israel, probably by levying contributions with rigour, and quartering his soldiers among them. In this distressed case, *Israel cried to the Lord*; and the Lord raised up Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. He was Caleb's nephew, and also his son-in-law, by marrying his daughter Achsah, being the same man of whom we read in Joshua xv. 16,—19. and Judges i. 13,—15. and so could not be long after Joshua's time. In his government is connected the history of Joshua and Judges. Soon after Israel's settlement in Canaan, their purity began to be corrupted, and by consequence their peace disturbed. *The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel*, that is, a spirit of wisdom and courage to qualify him for this service; he himself having seen the works of the Lord, retained his integrity, and lamented Israel's apostacy, re-proved them for it, and then went out to war, in which he was successful; for *the Lord delivered Cushan Rishathaim into his hands; and the land had rest forty years**. 'Tis agreed by most chronologers, that the years of oppression are here included in the years of rest, otherwise the particulars would far exceed the total sum of the period²: So that from Joshua's death to that of Kenaz, are only forty years, 'Tis not needful to debate whether
thirty-two

* A. M. 2558. Ant. C. 1397.

² 1 Kings vi. 1.

thirty-two of these years were before the oppression or after it, though I incline more to think they were before it. During that time, namely, from the death of Joshua, to the oppression of Cushan Rishathaim, the idolatry of the Danites, and the war with the Benjamites, occasioned by abusing the Levite's concubine, though recorded in Judges xvii. to xxi. seem to have happened; for then every tribe had very much of its government within itself, and acted without one common head or council, which occasioned disorders; and there are some things in these passages of history, that seem to pin them down to that time, as will appear by looking into them.

A man of the tribe of Ephraim, called Micah, having stolen from his mother eleven hundred shekels of silver, he owned the fact, and restored her two hundred; of which she made an idol. Micah built a little chapel for it, with an Ephod or Teraphim, appointing one of his sons to serve as a priest; but a young Levite of Bethlehem coming thither, Micah kept him to serve instead of his son. About the same time some of the tribe of Dan, having their lot assigned to them last of all the tribes, and thinking it too strait, which must be soon after Joshua's days, sent five men as spies from the south to the north of the land, to look out for some other habitation. In their journey the spies found out Micah and his idol, and afterwards discovered the city Laish in the north-west part of Canaan, which they judged might be easily gained by surprise, because the inhabitants feared nothing. Upon the report of the spies, the Danites sent six hundred men, well armed, who took Micah's priest and his idol, and went to Laish; which

which they seized without trouble, put to the sword all the inhabitants, burnt the town; and having rebuilt it, gave it the name of Dan their father. There they kept Micah's idol, and made Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons, their priests, all the time that the ark of the Lord was at Shiloh, that is, till Samuel's days.

The war with the Benjamites is another tragical piece of history, which seems to have happened about the same time, or not long after the death of Joshua; for it was when there was no king nor chief governor in Israel^a; and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was then high-priest^b. And 'tis like the idolatry of the Danites, and the immorality of the Benjamites, introduced the general defection of the tribes mentioned in Judges iii. 7. The sum of the story is: a Levite of mount Ephraim having taken a concubine, or wife, as some read it, of Bethlehem-Judah, *she played the whore*, and made an adulterous elopement from her husband, to her father's house, where she staid some months; yet the Levite himself went to court her return. Her father entertained him kindly for some days; but in the afternoon of the fifth day they departed, and were obliged to lodge in Gibeah of the tribe of Benjamin. There were then no houses of entertainment on the road, and no man of that city would invite them, till an old man of mount Ephraim, who only sojourned there, after some converse, received them into his lodgings. That night, while they were at table, the men of Gibeah were so wicked as to beset the house, and demanded the Levite that they might

know him. The old man finding them deaf to all reason, the Levite's concubine by consent went out to them, and they abused her till she died. Next morning the Levite finding his wife's dead body lying on the threshold, carried it home, and cutting it into twelve parts, sent one to every tribe, that a general assembly of Israel might consider what was fit to be done for the punishment of this wickedness, that a stop might be put to such an inundation of debauchery, and the wrath of God might not be poured out on the whole nation for it. The Israelites being all assembled, from Dan on the north, to Beersheba on the south, sent to demand of the tribe of Benjamin the men that had committed the crime; but the Benjamites refused to deliver them, and gathered together to defend Gibeah. A great army of the Israelites, of about 400,000 men, after asking counsel of the Lord, which of them should go up first? that is, who should march in the van, and command the battle? went to attack the place. But the army of the Benjamites, though only 26,000 men, put them to the rout, killing 22,000 of them. The Israelites again asked counsel of God, lamenting their loss, and were a second time defeated, with the loss of 18,000 men. Being too confident of the goodness of their cause, and the superiority of their numbers, they only enquired, who should go up first? but did not depend on the Lord for his assistance and blessing; wherefore, by these repeated losses, he signified his displeasure for their sins. Before the third engagement, they being truly humbled, looking to the Lord for success, the same was promised to them; which did not make them negligent; but they were more

more careful in laying an ambush, and using all warlike stratagems, in which they were so successful, that they entirely defeated the Benjamites, set fire to their cities, killed of them 25,000 men, and destroyed every thing belonging to them that came to hand. 'Tis easy to justify the hand of God in this matter; for Benjamin had deeply sinned; and the Lord had threatened, that if they did so they should surely perish^c. The sin of Gibeah was the beginning of the corruption of Israel^d: But their brethren in the heat of war seem to have dealt very hardly with them, to destroy them all, as if they had been Canaanites devoted to ruin, only six hundred men of the whole tribe escaping, who hid themselves four months in the rock Rimmon^e. Wherefore the Israelites, when they came to cooler thoughts, repented that they had almost cut off one of their own tribes, and considered how they might retrieve that loss: But being all under a solemn oath, not to give their daughters to the Benjamites, upon a muster they found the men of Jabesh-Gilead had been absent from the war, though threatened with death in case of neglect; therefore they sent twelve thousand men thither, with orders to kill all the men and married women in Jabesh, and to bring away the maids to be matched with the men that remained of Benjamin. Accordingly they found four hundred maids, who were given to the Benjamites remaining in the rock Rimmon; but this being too small a number of wives for them all, they gave them leave to carry off as many more as they had occasion for, of the young women that repaired to the festival at Shiloh, and to marry them.

^c Deut. xxviii, 20. ^d Hosea ix. 9. & x. 9. ^e Judges xx. 47.

them. This was a preposterous way of matching, without previous affection of parties, or consent of parents, not to be drawn into a precedent; though perhaps the parents might be afterwards satisfied when they understood that their daughters were married to men of plentiful fortunes, who had the whole tribe of Benjamin among them, and would be honourable mothers to a tribe in Israel; But these disorders were occasioned by want of a fixed magistracy; which, blessed be God, is not our case.

Soon after the death of Othniel, the children of Israel revolted again to idolatry, and did evil in the sight of the Lord; Therefore the Lord delivered them into the hands of Eglon king of Moab, who oppressed them eighteen years; yet when they cried to the Lord, he raised up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite¹. Though Benjamin was now the weakest of the tribes, yet out of it God raised a saviour, to signify that he was reconciled to them, and to manifest his power, in ordaining strength out of weakness. This man put to death Eglon king of Moab, as a minister of justice, executing the wrath of God upon him, as an implacable enemy to God and his Israel. The fact justifies itself, since it was done by a commission from God, who is righteous in taking vengeance, though it will by no means warrant any now in doing the like, when no such commission can be produced. Ehud told Eglon, that he had a message from God to him, which made the corpulent prince stand on his feet to shew reverence; and in the mean time Ehud gave him a mortal wound in the belly

¹ Judges iii. 12,—30.

belly by a dagger, made his escape at a back-door, gathered the people of Israel, secured the fords on the river Jordan, and killed all the Moabites that came to pass that way. In this manner he destroyed ten thousand of them, who might be the whole number then on the west side of Jordan, to keep Israel in awe: And the land enjoyed peace eighty years*. In this space is to be included the administration of *Shamgar, the son of Anath, who slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad, and he also delivered Israel.* 'Tis probable that Ehud being superannuated, the Philistines made an inroad into Canaan, to ravage it, and God put it into the heart of Shamgar to oppose them, he having neither sword nor spear, took the instruments next at hand, the tools of his plough, and with these killed so many men and came off unhurt. Thus a deliverance was wrought by unlikely means, that the excellency of the power might be seen to be of God and not of men.

The children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead. And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed them. This Jabin seems to have been a successor to another of the same name, whom Joshua overthrew. The city that was then burnt, he repaired, and reigned in the bounds of the tribe of Naphtali, near the waters of Merom, to the north-east of the land of Canaan. This oppression was

* A. M. 2633. Ant. Chr. 2317. ‡ Judges iv. 1,—3.

was more severe to Israel than the former; the enemy being nearer to them, in their very bowels, more capable to do them mischief. These Canaanites had been subdued by Joshua, and might have been rendered incapable of giving any disturbance, if the sloth, cowardice, and unbelief of Israel had not suffered them to gather to a head; and the memory of their former overthrow made them implacable. When God heard the cry of his people, he raised up Deborah, a prophetess in the tribe of Ephraim, who corrected abuses, redressed grievances, especially such as related to the worship of God, and decided differences between those that resorted to her for judgment. She sent and called Barak, the son of Abinoam, out of Kedesh-Naphtali, directing him to take ten thousand men out of his own and the neighbouring tribes, and fight the army of Jabin. At his desire she went with him; and in the name of the Lord promised success. They marched to the river Kishon, which seems to rise from the two sides of mount Tabor, and runs in one branch to the Mediterranean sea on the west, and by another into Jordan on the east. There Sisera met them with nine hundred chariots of iron, and a numerous army. But the Lord struck a terror upon him and his forces. *The stars in their courses fought against him*^a. Josephus^b says, "A violent storm of hail and rain was driven by the wind in the faces of the Canaanites, so as they could neither use darts, slings, nor other weapons; but the wind being on the backs of the Israelites, encouraged and pushed them forward: And thus, by the assistance of Heaven, the Canaanites

^a Judges v. 20.^b Antiq. lib. 5. cap. 6. p. m. 152, 153.

Canaanites were overthrown, and Barak's army pursued and cut them in pieces." Sisera himself leaving his chariot, fled a-foot till he came to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who entertained him kindly till he fell asleep, and then she drove a nail through his head; and when Barak came, he found him dead. A divine impulse may justify this fact of Jael to a public enemy: But now, when no such warrant can be pretended, it ought not to be imitated; but the laws of friendship and hospitality must be observed to those who put confidence in us. Deborah, the prophetess, praised God in a sweet song for the victory¹, where she magnifies the deliverance, by considering the calamities from which they were freed, by a remarkable appearance of the same God who gave the law at mount Sinai. She calls those who reaped the benefit to join in praises, commends these tribes who were forward in the war, and upbraids those who declined the service. And the land had rest forty years.

About the eighth year of Deborah's government happened the history that is recorded in the book of Ruth^{*}; for from the time of Joshua, we have only these generations, Salmon married Rahab, saved from the ruin of Jericho, because she hid the spies; of her he had Boaz, who married Ruth, the Moabitess. Now, if we reckon from the second year of Joshua's government, some time being requisite to instruct Rahab in the Jewish religion before her marriage, to the eighth year of Deborah, we will find 144 years: For 16 years of Joshua's government, 40 for that of Othniel, 80 for that of Ehud

Ehud and Shamgar, and 8 years of Deborah, make up that sum. If then we allow that Rahab was married in the eighteenth year of her age, which is not extraordinary, especially in those times, and brought forth Boaz in her fifty-sixth, having been married then thirty-eight years; and that Boaz had, by Ruth, Obed, in the hundred and sixth year of his age: These two numbers, 38 and 106, will also make 144 years, and consequently fall in the eighth year of Deborah, as the time of Obed's birth. I own, that where the scriptures do not precisely point out the year, chronologers differ; and so it is in the present case: But the reason why we thus fix the time of this event, will further appear when we come to answer difficulties upon the chronology of this period. 'Tis not very necessary to know who was the penman of this book; 'tis like to have been the same who wrote the book of Judges^k, with which it is connected, because the matters here recorded, happened in the time of the Judges; and it fitly goes before the books of Samuel, because in the end thereof the genealogy of David is introduced. Nevertheless the Jews commonly in their Bibles separate it from both, making it one of the five *Megilloth*, or volumes, near the end of their sacred writings; in this order, *Solomon's Song*, *Ruth*, *Lamentations*, *Ecclesiastes* and *Esther*. Here we have related, that in the time of the Judges, a great famine being in Israel, a man of Bethlehem, named Elimelech, went with his wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, into the land of Moab, to find food. Elimelech died there, and his relict married

^k See page 30.

ed her sons to two women of the country, named Orpah and Ruth. Two years thereafter the two sons of Naomi died; and she, resolving to return to Israel, desired her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab. Orpah with tears bade her farewell; but Ruth cleaving to the Jewish religion, and to her mother-in-law, followed her to Bethlehem, where she afterward married Boaz, by whom she had Obed, the father of Jesse, and grandfather of David. 'Tis not in vain that the scripture records the circumstances of Ruth, a poor Moabitish widow; for it is in order to her being grafted into the line of whom our Saviour, according to the flesh, came, that she might be a figure of the espousals of the Gentile church to Christ. Here also we have the law concerning marrying a brother's widow¹ illustrated by an example. The innocency of the times in which Ruth lived, and the character of Boaz, clear her of indecency in the methods she used in gaining the marriage, though the bad times wherein our lot is fallen will not justify any now in doing the like.

To return to the history of the Judges: Deborah being dead, *the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hands of Midian seven years^m*. This was a severe oppression: For the Midianites, who lay on the east side of Jordan, were a people whom Israel had conqueredⁿ; yet now this heedless mob came over Jordan as grasshoppers for multitude, destroyed all the provisions and forage; and sinful Israel being separated from their God, had no spirit to make head against their enemies, but hid themselves in

VOL. II. *THE HISTORY OF THE JUDGES* CHAP. I. *Deborah*

¹ Deut. xiv. 5.

^m Judges vi.

ⁿ Numb. xxxi.

dens and caves of the mountains. In this distress they cried to the Lord, who sent a prophet to reprove them for their sin and idolatry; and an angel of the Lord came to Gideon, the son of Joash the Abiezrite, of the tribe of Manasseh, as he was threshing wheat secretly, to hide it from the Midianites, and appointed him to deliver Israel from their oppression. This was no created angel, but the Son of God, our Redeemer, as a prelude of his incarnation: For he is called *Jehovah*, a name never given to a creature, and is worshipped and acknowledged as God. Gideon being conscious of his own weakness for so great a work, demanded a sign, to assure him of the divine assistance. *He brought a kid dressed, and some unleavened cakes: and there arose up a fire out of the rock, and consumed them:* Where the Angel of the Lord turned the meat-offering into one made by fire of a sweet savour, testifying his acceptance by a fire that came down from heaven. Gideon began his reformation by throwing down the altar of Baal, which his father had, either for himself, or for the whole town: Which being done, and the people of the place being informed who had done it, they demanded him of his father, to put him to death. Joash would not deliver him, but said, *If Baal is God, let him revenge himself on him that hath thrown down his altar:* Therefore he was called *Jerub-baal*, as a standing defiance to Baal, (let him defend his worshippers if he can) and an honour to Gideon, to be a declared enemy to this idol. The Midianites and Amalekites being encamped in the valley of Jezreel, the Spirit of the Lord put life in Gideon to oppose them. He gathered an army for that end: And upon his desire to have his hopes of suc-

cess

cess confirmed by signs, of a fleece wet with the dew, and the rest of the floor round it dry, and again, the floor wet and the fleece dry, the same was granted; which being truly miraculous, did abundantly serve to confirm his commission. Some make this an emblem of the Jewish church at that time, which was wet with the dew of God's word and ordinances, while all the rest of the world was dry: But since they rejected Christ and his gospel, they are dry, while the rest of the nations are as a watered garden.

Gideon being thus encouraged by Heaven, marched with his forces, then consisting of thirty-two thousand men, and encamped by the well of Harod^o, at or near the fountain of Jezreel^p. The Lord told him he had too many men: He would not deliver the Midianites into the hands of so great a number, that Israel should not glory in the deliverance as done by their own strength, but might give all the praise to the Almighty. Therefore Gideon made a proclamation, that whosoever was afraid might return to their own home: Whereupon two and twenty thousand left the army. The Lord again told him that the people were yet too many, and ordered him to bring them to the water, and separate those who drank out of their hands, from those who lay flat on the ground, and lapped out the water with their mouths. There were only three hundred who did the latter; yet the Lord assured him, that by so small a number he would deliver Israel from the Midianites: Whereupon the rest were dismissed. Next night Gideon went, with his servant Phurah,

^o Judges vii. ^p 1 Sam. xxix. 1. Wells' Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 2, p. 295.

Phurah, by divine appointment, so near the enemy's camp, that he heard one soldier expound a dream to another, signifying that Gideon should rout the Midianites. Encouraged by this prediction, he marched with his three hundred men, each of them carrying a trumpet, and an earthen pitcher in which was a lighted lamp. He posted them round the camp of the enemy. They all sounded their trumpets together, broke their pots, held their lamps in their hands, and cried, *The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.* Terror and confusion, impressed by a supernatural power, seized on the enemy's camp: They slaughtered one another; and those who survived, fled to Jordan; where even the Israelites who had been at home, pursued and destroyed them. Some interpreters^a make this to signify the destruction of the devil's kingdom in this world, by sounding the trumpet of the everlasting gospel, and holding forth the light thereof out of weak earthen vessels; for such ministers are, that the excellency of the power may be of God: Or, as representing the terrors of the great day. If these trumpets, pitchers and firebrands, did so affright the proud troops of Midian and Amalek; who shall be able to stand before that great terror, when the trumpet of the archangel shall sound, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the Lord himself shall descend with a shout?

Gideon having by a miraculous assistance gained a complete victory, gave notice to the inhabitants of mount Ephraim, to cut off the retreat of the Midianites, and secure the passes on Jordan. They seized Oreb and Zeeb, whom they put to death,

^a Henry on Judges vii.^r 1 Cor. iv. 6, 7.

death, presenting their heads to Gideon; yet complained that he had not called them to share of the honour of the victory. But he, like a wise judge, calmed their passions by a condescending speech¹; then, as a valiant general, he pursued the remainder of the Midianites over Jordan. They had made a terrible havock of themselves; one hundred and twenty thousand fell: But the two kings of Midian being, 'tis like, better provided for an escape than the rest, got over Jordan before the passes could be secured by the Ephraimites, and made towards their own country. Gideon followed them with his three hundred men; who being fatigued and weary, he asked provisions for them of the men of Succoth and Penuel; which they not only refused, but also mocked him: For which insolence he threatened them with military execution upon his return. At last he overtook the Midianites, while they were secure; routed them, took their two kings, Zeba and Zalmunna, prisoners; seized their ornaments, and killed themselves with his own hand, because by their own confession he found they had slain his brethren at Tabor. The destruction of these kings is long after pleaded in prayer as a precedent to hope for the ruin of the church's enemies². Next day, in his return, he chastised the elders of Succoth with thorns and brier, beat down the tower of Penuel, (both which places are in the tribe of Gad, on the other side of Jordan) and slew the men of their city, or those who had affronted him, as he had before threatened, for their ingratitude and insolence. After the victory, the men of Israel said unto Gideon,

¹ Judges viii.² Psal. lxxxiii. 11.

deon, *Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son: for thou hast delivered us from the hands of Midian.* This being in effect to give him an hereditary kingly government, he declined it, saying, *I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you.* Israel was then under a theocracy; God raised up extraordinary judges or rulers, and qualified them for governing his people prosperously, while they were subject to his laws: And such a ruler Gideon affected to be, and not to change their form of government. Nevertheless in this he erred, that having erected an altar by divine appointment in his own city Ophrah, for an extraordinary occasion, he thought it might be continued for ordinary use; and therefore raised contributions out of the spoil taken from his enemies, to hire priests, and to make priestly garments, especially an ephod, that he might consult God at his own home upon all occasions. *Which became a snare unto Gideon and to his house*^t: For there was in this practice, superstition and will-worship, serving God by a device of his own; presumption, in causing other priests to wear this kind of ephod which was peculiar to the high-priest; transgression of a plain command, of worshipping God but at one place and one altar^u, making a schism among the people, and laying a stumbling-block or an occasion of superstition before them. Midian being subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more, the country was quite forty years^v.

So soon as Gideon was dead, the children of Israel turned

^t Judges viii. 27.

^u Dent. xii. 5.

^v Judges viii. 28.

[•] A. M. 2713. Ant. C. 1237.

turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god^w. The name of this idol signifies, the Lord or God of the covenant. Dr. Cumberland^x conceives, that it was Chronus or Cham, worshipped at Berytus: others^y think this was a goddess of the Pœnicians, (the Hebrew terminations *ith* and *uth* being feminine) and that she was the same worshipped anciently by the Greeks and Romans under the name of Cybele: But I stay no longer upon it^z. This apostacy was punished by intestine broils and confusions among the Israelites themselves: For Gideon having several wives, had by them seventy sons, and also one named Abimelech, a base or natural son, born of a concubine at Shechem; who thrust himself into the government in his own city, by subtlety, and cruel murder of all the sons of his father. The Israelites were so degenerate, and so ungrateful to the house of Gideon, as not to revenge this barbarous massacre. For which Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, who had been by kind providence hid when his brethren were killed, reprov'd them in a pleasant parable^a, upbraiding them for chusing such a base person to be their king; and then retired for fear of Abimelech. At length a spirit of division arose between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, headed by one Gaal the son of Ebed, who being betrayed by Zebul, Abimelech's confident, was soon made disappear, and the men of Shechem ruined, a thousand of them being burnt to death in the house of their idol Berith. Abimelech pursued the remainder

^w Judges viii. 33.^x Phœnician History, p. 15.^y Juricu. Hist. des

Dogmes, &c. p. 619

^z See History of the Propagation of Christianity,Chap. 2. ^a Judges ix. See Dr. Patrick on Judges ix.

mainder of his enemies to a small city in the neighbourhood of Shechem, or Neapolis, called ^b Thebez, where he forced the inhabitants from the town into the castle; which when he endeavoured to burn, a woman threw a piece of a millstone on his head, which broke his skull; and he called on his armour-bearer to thrust him through with a sword, that it might not be said a woman had slain him. Thus God recompensed the wickedness that Abimelech had done in killing his seventy brethren. Of him it may be said, as of another tyrant, That he came in like a fox, ruled as a lion, and died like a dog, after he had been a plague to his country three years.

After him there arose to defend Israel, Tolah the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, of the tribe of Issachar *. He dwelt in mount Ephraim near the heart of the country, that the people might conveniently resort to him for judgment. Though there be little on record of him, yet he seems to have been a good peaceable man, raised up to reform abuses, to put down idolatry, to appease tumults, and heal wounds given to the church and state during Abimelech's usurpation; and he governed Israel twenty-three years ^c †.

Jair a Gileadite succeeded him, and judged Israel twenty-two years †. He was of the half tribe of Manasseh, on the east side of Jordan: Though they seemed separated from their brethren, yet God took care, that while the honour of the government shifted from tribe to tribe, before it settled in

^b Vide Hieronymum de locis Hebraicis ad vocem Thebez..

• A. M. 2716. Ant. C. 1234.

^c Judges x 1, 2.

† A. M. 2739. Ant. C. 1211.

‡ A. M. 2761. Ant. C. 1189.

in Judah, that they who lay remote should sometimes share in it. 'Tis remarked concerning this judge, *That he had thirty sons who rode on thirty asses colts.* His family increased, and his sons had preferments, being itinerant judges, who rode from place to place in their circuits, to administer justice, as deputies to their father; and they had good possessions, every one a city, called Havoth-Jair, that is, the villages or cities of Jair; either from a famous man among their ancestors of that name^d, or from their own father, who gave them to his sons, who fortified and enlarged them.

The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him^e. By introducing these foreign deities, they rendered themselves mean and despicable; for no nation that had any sense of honour would change their Gods; and it was the height of folly, wickedness and ingratitude towards the Lord their God, who had given them many miraculous deliverances. Therefore the Lord renewed his judgments upon them, for *he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, to the south-west of Canaan, and to the hands of the Ammonites, to the north-east, so as between these milstones the whole land was miserably crushed.* The oppression of the Ammonites continued eighteen years, a greater part of which seems to have been in the time of Jair. Even then was fulfilled, *that they should be slain before their enemies, and have no power to stand before them.*

VOL. II.

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^d Numb xxxii. 41. Deut. iii. 14. Josh. xiii. 30. ^e Judges x. 6.

them^e. Their ways and doings had procured this to themselves. In so great distress Israel cried to the Lord, saying, *We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.* He upbraided them for their folly; whereon they renewed their confession, and professed reformation; for *they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.* As an evidence of divine favour, they were directed to the choice of Jephthah to be their deliverer. He was the son of Gilead by an harlot^s. His brethren expelled him from his father's house, but being a mighty man of valour, having soldiers gathered to him, his countrymen at this time thought they could not chuse a fitter person to be their captain. He is recorded as one of the worthies of the Old Testament, who by faith did great thingsⁿ, even though he had not such an extraordinary call as the rest there mentioned. Having accepted the command, he sent messengers to the king of the children of Ammon, to expostulate for his oppressing Israel, being willing to prevent the effusion of blood; or if that could not be done, to let all the world see that the war was just and necessary. The king of the Ammonites, whose name is not on record, answered, *Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan; now therefore restore these lands peaceably.* To which Jephthah replied, That the Israelites had taken that land from Sihon king of the Amorites, who had been the aggressor, not only refusing them passage through his country, but

but also coming out to fight against them, that the Lord their God had given them that land, and what he had given them so long ago, they would not part with. Jephthah having so clear a call to the war, went over against the enemy, gained the victory, and took from them twenty cities. In his return, his daughter came out to meet him, with timbrels and dances; and *she was his only child, besides her he had neither son nor daughter.* This greatly afflicted him, for when he was going upon this dangerous expedition, he had vowed to the Lord, *That whatsoever should come forth of the doors of his house to meet him, should surely be the Lord's; and he would offer it up for a burnt-offering.* The vow was rash, and too general; and now he thought there was no remedy; for he said, *I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back.* His daughter submitted, only seeking *two months to bewail her virginity with her fellows upon the mountains;* lamenting that there should be none left to represent her father's honour and estate. At the end of the *two months she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow.* Whether he devoted her only to God and to perpetual virginity, or offered her up for a burnt-offering, I shall not determine. The latter seems more agreeable to the text. If he did so, it looks very barbarous; and none can be justified in doing the like. The men of Ephraim having insulted and threatened Jephthah for not calling them to assist in the war against the children of Ammon¹, the matter came to a battle, wherein the Gileadites overthrew the Ephraimites, and killed of them in the fight, and as they passed the river Jordan, forty-two thousand. Jephthah having

¹ Judges xii.

having judged Israel six years, died, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

After him, Ibzan of Bethel^m, judged Israel seven years †. He might have been an old man, though he was judge but for a short while; for he had thirty sons and thirty daughters, all of whom he lived to see married; and these numerous alliances, with his own personal merits, might qualify him for the government, which he exercised near the center of the kingdom, at Bethlehem-Judah.

Elon of Zebulun, in the north of Canaan, was next raised up to administer justice and reform abuses †. Ten years he continued in that office*. Dr. Lightfoot reckons, that in the beginning of his government, the forty years of the Philistines oppression, mentioned in Judges xiii. 1. commenced; and about that time Samson was born. 'Tis like that Elon, residing in the north of Canaan, the Philistines, who bordered upon its southern parts, took this opportunity to make inroads upon them.

Abdon, of the tribe of Ephraim, succeeded and governed Israel eight years ‖. In him the mighty tribe of Ephraim began to recover its reputation, having not afforded any person of note on sacred record since Joshua; for Abimelech the Shechemite was rather a scandal to it. This Abdon had a numerous offspring of forty sons, and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy ass-colts, either as judges and officers, or as gentlemen and persons of distinction. It might give him pleasure to see his
childrens

* A. M. 2767. Ant. C. 1183.

† A. M. 2784. Ant. C. 1166.

‖ A. M. 2793. Ant. C. 1158.

† A. M. 2773. Ant. C. 1176.

k Judges xli. 11, 12.

childrens children; but it is to be feared he did not see peace upon Israel; for by his time the Philistines had begun to oppress them.

The history of Samson, the last of the judges before Eli, is recorded at greater length; he made a great figure, and yet vastly different from that of his predecessors; for we never find him at the head either of a court, or of an army, in the throne of judgment, nor in the field of battle, yet in his own person a great patriot of his country, and a terrible scourge to its enemies and oppressors. He was an eminent believer¹, and a type of him, who *with his own arm wrought salvation*. The history of the rest of the judges begins with their advancement to that station, but Samson's, with his conception and birth. While the children of Israel were under oppression by the Philistines, to punish their sins, the Angel of the Lord appeared to the wife of Manoah, of the tribe of Dan, who was barren, and bare not, assuring her that she should have a son, who should be a Nazarite, and begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines. The woman told her husband, who desired that the same blessed Messenger might give them further instructions concerning the management of this child. God graciously answered his petition; the Angel again appeared, and repeated the directions. *She shall not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing*². Manoah offered to entertain the Angel with meat; but he declined it, and appointed it to be turned to a sacrifice, which he graciously accepted. By the whole conduct of the Angel,

¹ Heb. xi. 32.

² Judges xiii. 14.

Angel, he appears to have been an extraordinary person, even the Messenger of the Covenant, the Son of God, as a forerunner of his incarnation; for he is called *Jehovah*^a, a name incommunicable to a creature. He received and accepted of religious worship, and his name is *Secret*, or *Wonderful*. Manoah was struck with fear; but his wife, though the weaker vessel, was the stronger believer. She argued well, saying, *If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering at our hands;—nor would he as at this time have told us such things as these.* He would not have accepted our sacrifice, by turning it to ashes, nor given us such manifestations, nor such gracious promises, now when vision is rare, and we are under sore oppression.

The promise was soon accomplished, the woman who had been long barren, did bear a son, and called his name Samson; which is derived from *Shemesh*, the sun; and it seems he shined like a little sun. In his childhood he grew to more than ordinary strength; as an evidence of divine favour, in his youth, *The Spirit of the Lord began to move him*^o; He began to exert himself in more than ordinary actions, against the incursions of the Philistines. The other parts of his life are surprising and uncommon. He courted to wife a daughter of the Philistines at Timnath, which was contrary to the law of Moses. He did well to ask his father's advice. His parents were against it for fear of idolatry; but Providence over-ruled the matter, that Samson might have occasion to quarrel with the Philistines^p. As he was going to court

^a Judges xiii. 23.^o Judges xiii. 25.^p Judges xiv.

court the maid, he met a lion and killed it, tearing the ravenous beast in pieces with his hands. Passing afterwards the same way, to marry his bride, he found a swarm of bees in the throat of the lion he had killed before, which had made a honey-comb in it: He took it, and gave it to his father and mother, without telling them whence he had it. During the wedding-feast, Samson proposed a riddle to thirty young men sent by the Philistines to bear him company, or to watch him. *Out of the eater, said he, came forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness.* He gave them seven days to expound it, upon condition, that if they did so, he would give them thirty sheets, and thirty change of garments; but if they did not, they should give him the same number. These young men not knowing how to expound the riddle, on the seventh day of the week, but fourth day of the feast, applied themselves to his wife, to let them in to the secret. By her prayers and tears Samson was prevailed with to let her into it; and she immediately told it to these young men, who said to Samson, *What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?* He perceived his wife had discovered the mystery, and said, *If you had not ploughed with my heifer, you had not expounded my riddle.* Satan with his temptations could not do us so great mischief, if he did not plough with the heifer of our corrupt nature. The paying of the wager did not cost him much money, for going to Askelon, one of their chief cities, he there slew thirty of the Philistines, whose garments he gave to them that expounded the riddle: But being incensed at his wife, he retired to his father's house, and she was married

married to one of these young men who had attended the wedding.

At harvest time Samson returned, and was much surprised, when his father-in-law told him, that his wife was married to another^a. Looking upon the whole nation of Israel wronged in the affront done to him as a public person, he resolved to be revenged; and in order to it, found means by himself, or the help of others, to catch three hundred foxes, which he tied together two and two by the tails, with lighted torches to them, and so turned them in among the standing corn of the Philistines; to which they set fire in so many places at once, when it was dry, or in the night-time, that it could not be quenched. The Philistines understanding that it was Samson, son-in-law to the Timnite, who had done them this mischief, they came to Timnath and burnt his father-in-law and his wife; whereby they punished their own people for their treachery to Samson. Nevertheless he carried on his revenge; for he smote the Philistines with a great slaughter, and then retired to the top of the rock Etam, in the tribe of Judah. The Philistines came down to take him; but fearing to go up against him themselves, they demanded him of the men of Judah, who being afraid to oppose their enemies, upbraided Samson for what he had done, and offered to seize and deliver him to the Philistines. He suffered himself to be bound, and the Philistines came forward to lay hands on him: But he broke in pieces the cords with which he was tied; and taking up the jaw-bone of an ass, with it he killed a thousand Philistines.

^a Judges xv. See the Bishop of Ely's Notes on Judges xv. & Bocharti Hierozoicon, edit. 1682, p. 854, — 855.

times. The heat of the action made him so excessively thirsty, that he was ready to faint, had not the Lord caused a stream of water to flow out of a rock, called Lehi, or the jaw-bone, ¹ with which he quenched his thirst, and praised God for the victory. Then went Samson down to Gaza, where he saw an harlot, and went in to her ². This was his sin and folly, for an Israelite, a Nazarite dedicated to God, to join himself to a heathen harlot: And it was not without danger; for the Philistines having notice that their enemy was there, shut the gates, designing to apprehend him; but he rose at midnight, being perhaps rouzed by a dream, and went away with the gates of the city, the posts, bar and all upon his shoulders, and carried them to the top of a hill, which looks towards Hebron. He was again taken in the snare of unlawful love, to a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. This adulteress did hunt for his precious life. The princes of the Philistines made interest with her, saying, *Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, that we may bind him, to afflict him; and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver.* Five lords having made this offer, hence would arise 5500 pieces, amounting to about a thousand pounds Sterling. She used her utmost art to gain the reward. Josephus ³ insinuates, that she gave him intoxicating liquor. If he willingly took it, this would be a breach of his vow as a Nazarite. However Samson, after deceiving her three several times, was at last prevailed on by her importunity, to tell her all that was in his heart, saying, *There hath not come a razor upon mine head*

VOL. II.

I

from

¹ Joseph. Antiq. lib. 5. cap. 10. p. 162.

² Judges xvi.

³ Antiq. lib. 5. cap. 10. p. 162.

from my mother's womb, if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak as another man. Delilah then caused shave his head, as he lay asleep on her knees. Having lost the badge of his consecration as a Nazarite, the Philistines took him without any difficulty; and having put out his eyes, led him to Gaza, loaded with irons, and shut him up in prison. His strength and defence departed from him, when the covenant of his separation to God was profaned. Some time after the Philistines kept a day of rejoicing for the taking of their greatest enemy, and ascribed the honour of their victory over him to Dagon their god. After feasting and carousing, they brought out Samson to make sport to them. He had probably repented of his sin in the prison; and now his locks began to grow. Being brought to the house full of men and women, with three thousand on the top of it, he desired to feel the two pillars on which the house rested. 'Tis not incredible that so large a house might lean on two pillars; for many ancient arts are now lost, on which a learned author hath wrote a particular book^x, and especially that of architecture, which the Philistines might learn from the Phœnicians their neighbours. And we find one Curio, in the time of Julius Cæsar, built two theatres^y, which contained more people than this house of Dagon; and yet each of them leaned upon one pillar. Samson having laid hold on the pillars of the house, and prayed to God for his assistance, that he might be avenged only this once upon the Philistines for his two eyes, the house fell to the ground. The weight of the people on the

^x Pancirollus de rebus deperditis. ^y Plin Nat. Hist. lib. 36. cap 15.

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the top would contribute to the fall; and few of those who were on the top, or within it, could escape, being either stifled or crushed to death. Thus they whom he killed at his death, were more than those whom he slew in his life. Samson himself perished with the rest. He had often, as a public person, exposed himself to dangers, in opposition to the declared enemies of the church of God, and now was willing to die, to obtain a great victory over them. This then can give no encouragement to such as wickedly murder themselves; nay, 'tis rather a type of our Saviour, who, by willingly yielding himself to death, obtained a glorious victory over hell, and all the powers of darkness. Samson being dead, his friends buried him in the burying-place of Manoah his father, after he had judged Israel twenty years*. He pleaded the cause of Israel, and avenged them on their enemies in many wonderful actions; which deserve credit, since what is impossible with man, is possible with God: And that Israel was not fully delivered under the conduct of such a valiant captain, was owing to their own sin and want of courage. His life is not designed to be a pattern for us; for we are to live by rules, and not by examples: But it was rather a type of him, *who was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, that he might destroy and condemn sin in the flesh.*

§ 22. At this time Eli the high-priest judged Israel†. He succeeded Samson: And it is remarkable, that in the whole history of the Judges, some of whose actions are very particularly recorded, there is not so much as once mention of the high-priest,

* A. M. 2812. . Ant. Chr. 1139.

† 1 Sam. iv. 18.

priest, or any other priest or Levite appearing either for counsel or action, from Phinehas^a (who was the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron) to Eli, which may be reckoned two hundred and fifty years; only the names of the high-priests during that time are preserved^b. How can this be? Surely it intimates that this institution was chiefly intended to be typical, and the mighty benefits promised by it were to be chiefly looked for in the Antitype, the everlasting priesthood of our Lord Jesus, in comparison of which the Levitical priesthood had no glory. The principal events in the government of Eli are recorded in the first four chapters of the first book of Samuel; which books are so named, not because Samuel was the penman of them, except so much as was within his own time, to the twenty-fifth chapter of the first book; but because the first book contains a large account of him. The rest, concerning the reigns of Saul and David, might be writ by Nathan, Gad, or David himself. It is no matter though we know not the penman, since the record is indited by the Spirit of God as a part of the canon of the scriptures, as such received by the church of the Jews, and faithfully transmitted to us. The first book begins with the conception and birth of Samuel. Some scripture worthies are introduced abruptly, the first mention of them being in their full growth and lustre; others are described from their conception and nativity, as Moses, Samson, Samuel, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and our blessed Saviour. Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, a Levite of mount Ephraim, had been long barren. Her husband's other

^a Judges xx. 16.^b 1 Chron. vi. 4,—7.

other wife, Peninnah, reproached her; which was so afflicting to her spirit, that when she went up to Shiloh to the solemn feasts, she did not eat. Her husband, who dearly loved her, comforted her, saying, *Am not I better to thee than ten sons?* yet her concern put her to prayers and tears. She begged a child, a man-child, that he might be for the service of the tabernacle; and if God would give her such a child, she vowed she would devote him to God as a Nazarite from the womb. Eli the priest perceiving her lips move, but her voice not heard, at first censured her as one drunk; but being better informed, that she was a woman of a troubled spirit, pouring out her complaint before God, he encouraged her, saying, *The God of Israel grant thee thy petition: go in peace.* Whereupon she went away, and did eat of the remainder of the peace-offerings; none of which was to be left till the morning: And having good hopes of the hearing of her prayers, *her countenance was no more sad.* She and her husband went home, and soon had a man-child, named Samuel; whom his mother nursed, and thereafter presented him to the Lord at the tabernacle, conformable to her vow, with burnt-offerings and meat-offerings: And being sensible of the greatness of her mercy, with a spirit of prayer and prophecy she indited a pleasant song^b. Elkanah being dismissed with the high-priest's blessing, went home to his house; where his wife Hannah bare him three sons and two daughters^c. These pious parents came up yearly to offer their sacrifices at Shiloh: Hannah brought to Samuel her son a little coat, and rejoiced to see him minister

^b 1 Sam. ii. 1, -- 11.^c 1 Sam. ii. 20, 21.

ter to the Lord under the direction of the high-priest. But matters went not so well with the family of Eli. The wickedness of his sons was great: They profaned the offspring of the Lord; for, to gratify their own luxury, they took violently from the people a great share of the peace-offerings which did not belong to them: And though they had wives of their own, they debauched those that came to worship at the door of the tabernacle. Old Eli was grieved with the report of these enormities, yet reprov'd his sons with too great mildness and lenity: Wherefore the Lord sent him an alarming message by a prophet, threatening the ruin of his family for the wickedness his sons were guilty of.

Meantime Samuel increased in the favour of God: He not only appeared as a young priest, girt with a linen ephod, though by birth a Levite only; but also as a young prophet, in whom the spirit of prophecy, then rare and uncommon, did revive^d. When Eli was a-bed, God manifested himself to Samuel in an extraordinary way, discovering the judgments he would inflict on the house of Eli: which he related faithfully to the old man next morning, when he adjured him to tell the matter; and the high-priest patiently submitted to the divine sentence: Though he knew that it entail'd disgrace and poverty on his posterity, yet he said, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* And Samuel was established a prophet, which all Israel knew. The predictions against the family of Eli soon began to be fulfilled. The Philistines had been long oppressors of Israel, and by this time had recovered from the mischiefs that

that Samson had done them. They gained a victory at Aphek, killing about four thousand Israelites^c. The elders of Israel, without resolving to fast, to pray, or amend their lives, quarrelled with God for appearing against them, saying, *Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us?* and concerted measures for another engagement. They caused the ark of the Lord to be carried from Shiloh unto the army, for which they had no warrant. Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, who had provoked the Lord with their wickedness, went along with it. The Israelites rejoiced at the sight thereof, and the Philistines were alarmed; yet this only sharpened their courage, *to be strong, and quit themselves like men.* And in the day of battle Israel were put to the flight: The Philistines killed thirty thousand of them, the ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli were slain. External privileges will secure none that abuse them, and live unlike to them. To this sad event the Psalmist refers: *He gave his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies hands.——Their priests fell by the sword*^d. A man of the tribe of Benjamin brought the news to Eli; who hearing that the ark of God was taken, fell from his seat, broke his neck, and died. He was an old man of ninety-eight years, and heavy; his eyes dim that he could not see, and had judged Israel forty years^e. He was also a good man, more taken up about the interest of the church, than any secular concern of his own: *His heart trembled for the ark of God.* No wonder; the ark was a special symbol of God's presence; it had remained at Shiloh from Joshua's days,

^c 1 Sam. iv. ^d Psal. lxxviii. 67, 68.

^e A. M. 2832. Ant. C. 1098.

days, three hundred and fifty years or thereby: But now their candlestick was removed, and did never return to that place. The desolations of Shiloh ought to be remembered, that we may not provoke God by our sins to remove his ordinances from us as from that city ^a. Of the same pious disposition were others, particularly the wife of Phinehas, Eli's daughter-in-law, being near her time, her child-bearing pains came upon her at hearing these doleful news. Though she brought forth a son, she did not regard it; but, dying, desired to call her son Ichabod, because *the glory was departed from Israel, the ark of God was taken*.

The Philistines triumphed, and placed the ark of God in Ashdod, (called by the Greeks and Romans, Azotus) one of their five principal cities, and set it by Dagon in the house of Dagon ^b. Tho' heathenish idols admitted of partners, God will admit of none: He alone must be worshipped. The Israelites had no courage to vindicate the cause of their God, but he asserted his own. The triumph of the Philistines was short: Dagon fell twice before the ark; the head of Dagon and both his hands were cut off on the threshold, only the stump or fish-like part remained: (For Dagon is derived from Dag, a fish; and the Jews say, that from the navel downwards he had the shape of a fish, and upwards the shape of a man; of which I have writ more fully in another essay ^c.) Down he comes before the ark, to signify the fall of the kingdom of Satan before the kingdom of Christ. Error must yield to truth, and corruption to grace. The downfall of Dagon did not make the Philistines

^a Psal. lxxviii. 60, 67. Jer. vii. 14. ^b 1 Sam. v. ^c See the History of the Propagation of Christianity, Chap. 2. Kimchi in 1 Sam. v. 2.

times repent of their idolatry, and seek the God of Israel, as they ought to have done; and therefore many of them were destroyed, and others were smitten with emrods^k. This made them acknowledge the power of the God of Israel, and send his ark to Gath; where they, and also the Ekronites, feeling his avenging wrath, at last sent the ark of God home to the land of Canaan, with rich presents, of five golden emrods and five golden mice, after it had been detained in the land of the Philistines seven months^l. Two milk cows carried the ark, on a new cart, to Beth-shemesh in the tribe of Judah. The men of that place rejoiced to see it; they offered the cows in a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, and set down the ark of the Lord on the great stone Abel. But the people in and about Beth-shemesh, to gratify a sinful curiosity, looked into the ark, (which was forbidden even to the Levites^m under pain of death;) and *the Lord smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten menⁿ*. If this be thought an act of too great rigour, let it be considered, First, That men are very incompetent judges of these matters, since they understand not the reasons and causes of these judgments, and particularly of his severe procedures against the people of Israel under the Old Testament dispensation, for those sins that did immediately concern his worship, as a warning to others: Yet it is certain, though God's way be often secret, it is never unrighteous. Secondly, Many learned men translate and understand this text otherwise, and make the number smitten at Beth-shemesh much smaller. Josephus^o.

VOL. II.

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^k Psal lxxviii. 66. ^l 1 Sam. vi. ^m Numb. iv. 18, 20. ⁿ 1 Sam. vi. 19. ^o Antiq. lib. 6. cap. 2. p. m. 172.

the Jew, says, only seventy men were killed. A very learned author^p translates it, *He smote of or among the people, seventy men out of fifty thousand*; the particle *mem*, of, or, out of, being understood before the word *fifty*. The Romans used to make a decimation, by cutting off every tenth man, in case of the general guilt of their army: Here it is the twentieth man. The Syriac and Arabic versions read this text, *five thousand and seventy men*. Finally, Some think the seventy men were Beth-shemites, slain for looking into the ark, and the fifty thousand were those who were slain for profaning the ark in the land of the Philistines.

The men of Beth-shemesh were so struck with the terror of this judgment, that they sent a message to the people of Kirjath-jearim to fetch away the ark; who complying with their desire, brought it to the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep it^q, and *all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord*. It rested there twenty years. The people being sensible, that by their sin they had provoked the Lord to withdraw his ordinances and signs of his presence, and give them up to their enemies, longed for his return. This encouraged Samuel to begin a general reformation, exhorting them, *Put away (says he) the strange gods, and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines*. The people obeyed these orders, and assembled at Mizpeh; where they fasted, wept and prayed. The Philistines hearing of this general meeting of Israel, marched to attack them. The Israelites were

^p Bocharti Hierozoicon, lib. 2. p. 370. See the Bishop of Ely on 1 Sam. vi. 19. ^q 1 Sam. vii.

were afraid of their old oppressors, and entreated Samuel never to cease in praying to God for them; which he cheerfully did, and made intercession, by offering up a lamb in a burnt-sacrifice. The Lord graciously accepted his oblation, and heard his prayer; the Philistines were entirely defeated, in such a manner as magnified the power of God: For the text says, *The Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, until they came under Beth-car.* Josephus adds, that the earth quaked, and in many places opened and swallowed up the Philistines; their faces and hands were burnt with lightening, and they obliged to shift for themselves by flight. Honour was put on the hosts of Israel, being employed to pursue and complete the victory. For all which Samuel erected a monument, by setting up a stone between Mizpeh and Shen, which he called Ebenezer, saying, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.* From this time the Philistines came no more into the coasts of Israel; the hand of the Lord was against them all the days of Samuel, and the Israelites recovered the towns taken from them, from Ekron even to Gath. Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life, going from year to year in circuit to Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh, for the convenience of his country, though his ordinary residence was at Ramah, his father's city. Thither they resorted from all parts of the land to have their complaints heard, and their causes determined; and there *he built an altar to the Lord:* Which he did not in contempt of the one place of worship;

worship^a; but (God having laid Shiloh waste, looking on the law tying them to one place for the present suspended) as a prophet under divine direction, as the patriarchs of old, he built an altar near his own residence, for the use of his own family, and the good of those who resorted to it.

When Samuel was old, he made his sons, Joel and Abiah, judges over Israel. They walked not in his ways, but took bribes, and perverted judgment. This made the people incline to a change of government, and desire a king; a poor prophet in a mantle, though conversant in the visions of the Almighty, looked mean in their eyes: They would have a king, with his guards and officers of state, to appear great as other nations. The thing displeased Samuel; it cut him to the heart^c, and surprised him. He went to God in prayer concerning it, and the Lord said to him, *Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. They are weary of a theocracy, or divine government of judges, having a call and commission immediately from God; but let them be beaten with their own rod: [God gave them a king in his anger^d.] Shew them the laws and customs of the kings in the east: Ask them how they will bear the pomp and magnificence, the charges and arbitrary power of such a potentate? He must have a great retinue of servants, a magnificent table, a standing army, great favourites, and great revenues to maintain his power. These would be their grievances, and they would have none but God to complain to. Notwithstanding this fair warning, they were obstinate in their demand, and it was granted to them.*

§ 23. The

^a Deut. xii. 11. ^b 1 Sam. viii. ^c Hosca xiii. 11.

§ 23. The appearance of Providence in the election of their king was remarkable. Saul the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, was a handsome youth, taller by head and shoulders than any of the people^x. His father's asses being gone astray, he sent his son Saul, with a servant to seek them. He was careful of his parent's interest, and obedient to his commands, yet sought the asses in vain: But as he was passing through the land of Zuph, his servant said to him, *Behold there is in this city a man of God, an honourable man, all that he saith cometh to pass; peradventure he can shew us which way we should go.* God had the day before given Samuel notice of his coming, and that he was the person who was to be king: Wherefore when Saul asked him, *Where is the house of the seer?* Samuel answered, *I am the seer: go up before me unto the high-place, and ye shall eat with me to day, and to-morrow I will let you go. As for thine asses that were lost three days ago, they are found: and on whom is the desire of Israel? is it not on thee?* He entertained him with respect above all the other guests at table; and next day having caused him send away his servant, he poured a vial of oil upon his head and kissed him^y, and said, *Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?* As a sign of the truth of his designation to this office, Samuel prophesied, that on his return he should meet two men near Rachel's sepulchre, who should tell him that his father's asses were found; and that in the plain of Tabor, he should meet three men going to Bethel, one of them with three kids, another with three loaves of bread, and a third with a bottle of wine; and that

^x 1 Sam. ix.

^y 1 Sam. x.

that when he came to the hill of God, where there was a garrison of the Philistines, he should find a company of prophets going into the city, where the Spirit of God should come on him, and he should prophesy among them. These prophets 'tis like were not divinely inspired to foretel things to come, but employed themselves in the study of the law, in instructing their neighbours, and in acts of piety, especially in praising God, in which they were assisted by the holy Spirit. All the signs happened as foretold; but none of them was so remarkable as Saul's associating himself with the prophets. In a short time his nomination to the throne was made public, in a general assembly of the elders of Israel, and representatives of the tribes at Mizpeh. The people signified their approbation, choice and acceptance of him, saying, *God save the king*; that is, let the king live, let him long reign over us in health and prosperity: Only some few men of Belial despised him, which was not noticed. Saul went home to Gibeah, to his father's house, with a small band of men, whose heart the Lord had animated for this service; and the congregation being dismissed, every man went to his own house.

In the beginning of this king's government, Nahash king of the Ammonites laid siege to Jabez-Gilead, on the other side of Jordan. The people offered to surrender upon terms of safety; but Nahash imposing disgraceful conditions, *to thrust out their right eyes, and lay it as a reproach upon Israel*, they sent to Gibeah to demand the aid of Saul. When the messengers came, he had gone out to see his flocks^a: But upon his return, hear-
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ing a general lamentation among the people, he was so animated with zeal for the public service, that he sent messengers through all Israel, summoning them in his own name, and in that of Samuel, to come to the relief of Jabesh, upon pain of a severe death, or being cut to pieces, as he had done with a yoke of oxen. The people obeyed, so as there appeared in a very short time three hundred thousand Israelites, and thirty thousand of the tribe of Judah; whereon Saul sent welcome tidings to the men of Jabesh, then in perplexity, promising them relief next day. And accordingly, dividing his army into three companies, he fell upon the camp of the Ammonites in the morning watch, about day-break, and killed them till noon. These that escaped were so scattered, as two of them were not left together. The people were so ravished with this victory, that they would have all who despised Saul put to death: But he opposed the motion; and they made a public recognition and confirmation of his election to the government of Gilgal, where they sacrificed and gave thanks to God as the author of all their success.

Samuel made a speech to them*, before he entirely resigned the government into the hands of Saul. In his discourse he clears himself of all wrong administration, minds them of the great things God had done for them, and for their fathers; sets before them the blessing attending obedience to the law of God, and the curse following upon disobedience; and by the Lord's sending thunder and rain in the time of wheat-harvest, which was unusual, convinceth them of their sin in seeking a king. If it be asked, wherein consists

* 1 Sam. xii.

sists their sin in this matter? I answer, not simply in desiring a king, for that was foretold^b; but that they desired a king, as being weary of divine government by judges. They asked him in an impetuous manner, at an unreasonable time, before the government of Samuel, which had been so useful, was expired, and without seeking leave or advice from God, which, in so weighty and difficult a case, ought not to have been neglected. The people being by these divine signs made sensible of their sin, confessed it, were afraid of judgments, and desired Samuel to pray for them, which he promised to do, telling them also, that all should be well, if they would fear and serve the Lord in truth, and with all their heart; but if they still did wickedly, God would consume both them and their king.

While Samuel was joined in commission with Saul, matters went prosperously, but so soon as Saul began to reign alone, all went wrong; for in the second year of his reign^c, he chose him a band of three thousand men, of which two thousand remained with the king at Michmash, and 1000 with Jonathan his son at Gibeah. If he intended these for a guard to his person, they were too many, if for a standing army against the Philistines, they were too few. Jonathan, 'tis like, by his father's orders, cut off a garrison of the Philistines at Geba. If this was done in violation of the articles of peace, as some conceive^d, it was wrong, and had this effect, that Israel was had in abomination by the Philistines, who gathered together a great army of six thousand horse, which was rare in those days, thirty thousand chariots, and

^b Deut. xvii. 14, 15. ^c 1 Sam. xiii. ^d Henry on 1 Sam. xiii.

and people as the sand on the sea-shore for multitude, whom Josephus^e calls three hundred thousand foot, and pitched at Michmash. Meantime Saul had but a small host. He and his people were faint-hearted, so as many hid themselves in caves and rocks, or retired over Jordan. Saul waited for Samuel seven days at Gilgal; but having no patience to stay till the seventh day was at an end, though that seems to have been the appointed day of meeting, the king himself, though he was neither priest nor prophet, offered sacrifices. Before the burnt-offering was well over, Samuel came and reproved Saul for his presumption; who not repenting, rather pleaded excuse for what was done; and Samuel told him, the kingdom should not continue in his family; *The Lord hath sought a man after his own heart to be captain over his people.* Then the prophet retired from the camp, where Saul had only six hundred men with him, and these without sword or spear, the Philistines having suffered no smiths to live in the land of Israel. In this bad posture of affairs, the Philistines in three companies spoiled and pillaged all the country. God having compassion on his people, that they might not be ruined by the uncircumcised, filled Jonathan with a divine impulse to make a bold adventure upon the enemies: He and his armour-bearer trusting in the conduct of Providence, scrambled up over the rocks, killed about twenty men of the Philistines. A trembling fear, or as in the original phrase^f *a trembling of God*, being supernatural, coming immediately from the hand of God, seized upon the whole camp. The earth quaked, and all was in such a confusion,

^e Antiq. lib. 6. cap. 7. p. 180.

^f 1 Sam. xiv. 19.

as the army melted away, and fled when none pursued; and went on killing one another: Being, 'tis like, made up of mercenary soldiers from neighbouring nations, they understood not what others spake, and in this consternation destroyed one another. The watchmen of Saul observing how the matter went, informed the king, who quickly gathering as many as he could, with many who had before deserted, pursued the enemy; and, in this confusion, killed them from Michmash to Ajalon. But the pursuers became faint, for Saul had adjured them, saying, *Cursed be the man that eateth any food until the evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies.* This rash interdict had bad effects; for the people at even run upon the spoil, took sheep, oxen and calves, which they killed on the ground, and eat with the blood, till a remedy was provided for the enormity. The Lord being consulted, if Israel should pursue the Philistines next day, it was answered, *Not that day.* The cause of this being enquired into, Jonathan was taken by lot, who not hearing his father's prohibition, had tasted a little honey, for which his father sentenced him to die; but the people rescued him as the instrument of their deliverance.

After this victory Saul fought against his enemies on every side, against Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and whithersoever he turned he vexed them. He had a flourishing family, Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz his wife, Jonathan, Ishui, and Melchishua, his sons, Michal and Merab, his daughters, and Abner, his cousin-german, general of his host. Samuel commanded him to make war on the Amalekites, and utterly destroy them, because they had laid

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wait for Israel, when they came out of Egypt, as is recorded in Exod. xvii. 8,—16. and Deut. xxv. 17,—19. In obedience to this charge, Saul mustered a great army of two hundred thousand foot, and ten thousand men of Judah; and having given warning to the Kenites, the posterity of Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, to depart from the Amalekites, which they did, he smote the Amalekites from Havilah unto Shur; that is, to the borders of Arabia, Egypt, and the Red-Sea^e. Yet he did his work but by halves; for he spared King Agag and the best of the cattle^h. Upon his return Samuel came to Gilgal, where he smartly reproved the king for sparing the cattle of the Amalekites. Though Saul had done this from a covetous inclination, to keep the cattle for his own gain, yet he pleaded for excuse, that they were reserved to sacrifice to the Lord. But the prophet told him, *That obedience was better than sacrifice.* Conformity to the moral precepts recommends us more to God than all ceremonial performances; and since he had rejected the word of the Lord, God had rejected him from being king. Whereon Samuel would have left Saul; but he detained him, to gain the respect of the people: For if the prophet left him at this juncture, he feared his subjects would all revolt. Samuel caused Agag to be cut in pieces, and then returned to Ramah; and Saul went to Gibeah, his own city. From that time he came no more to see the king, yet he mourned for him, and for the bad state of the country.

§ 24. Samuel was once more called out from his retirement, where he instructed young prophets,

^e Gen. xlv. 18.

^h 1 Sam. xv.

phets, to do a piece of public service, namely, to anoint a man, after God's own heart, to be captain over his people. The prophet being ordered to go to Beth-lehem¹, the elders of that town trembled at his coming; but he told them he came peaceably, to sacrifice to the Lord; and called Jesse and his sons to sanctify themselves and come to the sacrifice. When Jesse and his seven sons appeared before Samuel, the Lord let him know that none of these was the person whom he designed: But Jesse having yet another son keeping sheep, the prophet ordered him to be called. *He was ruddy, of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Rise, anoint him; this is he.* Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. Though his outward circumstances were not changed in the mean time, for he continued keeping his father's flock; yet the anointing was not an empty ceremony: A divine power went along with the instituted sign, and he found himself inwardly advanced in wisdom, courage, concern for the public, and all qualifications proper for a prince; to satisfy him that his election was of God. Samuel having done this service, retired again to Ramah: And we never read of him but once^k, till we hear of his death. He thought he might die in peace, having *seen the salvation of God*, even the sceptre brought into the tribe of Judah. *The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.* He having forsaken God and his duty, the Lord, in his righteous

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ous judgment, withdrew from him those assistances of the good Spirit which formerly fitted him for the government; and he became fretful, peevish, discontented and timorous, even a terror to himself. Josephus¹ says, that "he sometimes became like a Demonaic, like one choked or strangled." And thus he was rash in his counsels, a contempt of his enemies, and a burden to all about him. In these circumstances, one of the king's servants recommended David, whose anointing was a secret, as a proper person to be sent for to court, to cure the king of this melancholy. So soon as the messengers came, David's father sent him, with a small present of bread and wine, usual in those plain times: And he proved an useful physician to the king. Josephus^m adds, that he sung hymns, whereby Saul's thoughts were staid from entertaining evil suggestions. The king loved David, and chose him for his armour-bearer. And thus, without any contrivance either of David or his friends, he had access to court, to see the world; and was further fitted for the service to which God had designed him.

David was also qualified for the camp, by a remarkable appearance of Providence in his favour: For though the Philistines had been lately routed, yet, probably hearing of Saul's distemper, and that Samuel no longer assisted nor advised him, they gathered an army, and encamped between Shochoh and Azekah, in the tribe of Judahⁿ. Saul mustered his forces, and faced them in the valley of Elah. A mighty man, named Goliath, who was six cubits and a span high, (which some^o compute ten

¹ Antiq lib 6. cap. 9. p. m. 187. ^m Ibid. ⁿ 1 Sam. xvii. ^o Dupin's Abridgment of the Church History, vol. 1. p. 142.

ten feet; others ^p, reckoning twenty-one inches to a cubit, make him eleven feet four inches) well armed from head to foot, came out between the two armies forty days successively, challenging any of the Israelites to a single combat. Saul and Israel were afraid at this bravado, because the Spirit of the Lord was departed from them. At length David coming to the camp with provisions to his brethren, offered to engage this Philistine. Saul told him he would not be able to withstand such an adversary, who was elder, stronger, and a man of war from his youth. But David gave a reason for his courage from faith and experience: For by divine assistance he had formerly killed a lion and a bear which robbed him of his lambs; and the Lord Jehovah, who had delivered him from the mouth of the lion and the paw of the bear, would deliver him from this Philistine. Saul then encouraged him, saying, *Go, and the Lord be with thee.* Yet he would not use the armour given him, because he had not proved it; but advanced against the provoking Philistine with a staff, a sling, and five smooth stones chosen out of the rivulet that run by; And putting his confidence in *Jehovah Sabaoth*, the God of the armies of Israel, to whom he would give the praise, he threw a stone from the sling, so exactly and with such force, that the stone sunk in the forehead of Goliath; and he fell upon his face to the earth. Then David ran in upon him, and cut off his head with his own sword. The event of this combat striking a terror into the army of the Philistines, they fled; The Israelites pursuing them to the gates of Ekron,

ron, in their return plundered their camp. David being now a conqueror, brought the head of the Philistine to Jerusalem, perhaps to be a terror to the Jebusites, who then held the strong hold of Zion. Great notice was taken of this action, yet Saul being melancholy, seems to have forgotten David; and therefore asked, as if he had never seen him, *Whose son is this youth?* Abner could not tell, having taken little notice of the king's musician; yet he introduced him to the court, where he appeared with greater advantage than before. Jonathan, the king's eldest son, made a covenant, and contracted extraordinary friendship with him, giving him his own robe and garments, even to his sword, his bow and his girdle; whereby he equipped him both as a courtier and as a soldier^a. Saul gave him the command of a part of the army; and he was acceptable to the king's servants at court, and to all the people. But David's troubles trode upon the heels of his triumphs. In a progress that Saul seems to have made over the country, women in many parts sung a song, whereof the burthen was, *Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands*; and from that time he never looked on David with a good eye. In his fury he threw a javelin to nail him to the wall, as he was playing on the harp: But he avoided the blow, and retired out of his presence. He removed him from court, and gave him the command of a thousand men in the army; where he behaved with such wisdom and courage, as to increase his reputation. Then Saul proposed to marry him to Merab, his eldest daughter, but gave her

^a 1 Sam. xviii.

her to another, in order to provoke him; yet offered to give him his youngest daughter Michal, who had a secret kindness to him: And he had merited such a match when he killed Goliath^r; but the offer was made on condition that he should kill a hundred Philistines, to endanger his life. David was so far from declining the terms, that he killed two hundred Philistines, and brought their fore-skins in full tale to the king. Thus at last he obtained his bride, and behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul.

Notwithstanding all this, Saul's enmity increased against David, so as he spoke to his son Jonathan, and to his officers at court, to put him to death; which was so far contrary to Jonathan's inclinations, that he patched up an agreement between David and his father^t: And David behaved so valiantly in a new war with the Philistines, that *they fled from him, and he slew them with a great slaughter*. This added to Saul's envy, so as when David played on the harp, he sought to smite him to the wall with his javelin or spear: But he fled, and escaped. Next morning Saul ordered him to be secured; but Michal, his wife, got him out at a window, and put a sham on the instruments of cruelty sent to catch him, by placing a teraphim, or a wooden image, with a pillow of goats hair, in the bed, as if it had been her husband, sick and fast asleep. David finding that he was *persecuted by bloody men*, (as he speaks in the fifty-ninth psalm, penned upon this occasion) retired to Samuel, at Najoth, near Ramah, where the prophets dwelt. Thither Saul sent messengers twice to apprehend him,

^r 1 Sam. xvii. 25.

^t 1 Sam. xix.

him, who all fell a prophesying; and coming himself, he was seized with the same spirit. In the mean time David taking it into serious consideration, if it might be necessary for him to retire into the country, and take up arms for his own defence, did judge it in the first place proper to consult Jonathan his faithful friend; who promised to do all that in him lay to appease his father, and to give him notice if he could not prevail. These two entered into a strict covenant of friendship, ratified with a solemn oath¹. At the feast of the new-moon, which Saul observed, though he was rejected of God, finding David absent, the king asked his son, *Why cometh not the son of Jesse, neither yesterday nor to-day?* Jonathan, conformable to his promise, made David's excuse, That he had asked leave to go to Bethlehem, to keep a sacrifice with his father's family; which was true. At hearing this, Saul became implacable, telling Jonathan, *That as long as the son of Jesse lived, he would never be established in the kingdom. Fetch him to me: for he shall surely die.* At which words Jonathan rose from the table, and in the morning went to the field; where he acquainted David, as they had agreed, and they parted with tears, and tokens of sincere friendship.

David having now taken leave of Saul's court and camp, was treated as an outlaw and traitor, being obliged to shift from place to place for his own safety. His troubles are very particularly related, not only to be a key to the Psalms, but also that he, as other prophets, might be an example to saints in all ages, of sufferings and patience;

and especially that he might be a type of Christ, who being anointed to the kingdom, humbled himself, and was therefore highly exalted. Only the sufferings of Jesus are a copy without a blot; those of David are not so. For David came to Nob^u, where the tabernacle then was; being willing to see it, before, to his grief, he should be banished from public ordinances, which he so highly valued, as appears from the forty-second, sixty-third and eighty-fourth psalms. There Ahimelech the priest said, *Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?* And David said, *The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of it.* What he told was false, and occasioned the death of the priests of the Lord. Though he was a man of faith and courage, yet here he betrayed fear and cowardice. Had he trusted God aright, he would not have used such a sorry shift for his preservation. David asked of Ahimelech bread. Travelling was then troublesome, when there were no public-houses to lodge in; and men were obliged to carry provisions with them. The priest said he had none but hallowed bread, even the shew-bread, that had been a week on the golden table of the sanctuary, and was taken thence for the priests and their family, when new bread was substitute in the room thereof. David considering his present necessity, and that his followers were under no ceremonial uncleanness, took it. Next he wanted a sword, and there was none to be had, save that of Goliath the Philistine, wrapt in a cloth, behind the ephod; and he said, *Give it me; there is none like it.* He had before done execution with

^u 1 Sam. xxi.

with it ; and being now well grown in strength and stature, he was able to manage it. David thinking himself not safe at Nob, where he saw Doeg, the chief of Saul's herdsmen, who he feared would betray him, fled to Achish king of Gath. That prince's servants suspected him, and said to their master, *Is not this the king of the land? Did they not sing of him, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?* Startled at these words, the good man counterfeited himself mad. Which can scarce be justified, as not becoming his honour and sincerity ; yet it may be excused, being like a stratagem in war, to impose upon his enemies, in order to escape from danger. And it had the desired effect ; for the heathen king *drove him away ; and he departed.* But though he changed his behaviour, he did not change his spirit : His heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord, as appears by the thirty-fourth and fifty-sixth psalms, penned upon this occasion, as their titles bear.

David being driven from the land of the Philistines, retired to the cave of Adullam ; which is in the tribe of Judah ^w : Thither his brethren, with all his father's house, with many who were oppressed with debts, or discontented, resorted to him, making in all a band of four hundred men. Joab, Abishai, and other worthies, were of the number of his relations who here ventured with him ^x, in hopes of being afterwards advanced by him. He took care to settle his aged parents in a place of safety in the land of Moab, *till, says he, I know what God will do for me ;* expecting a good issue of his troubles ; not from his own art or arms, but from the

^w Josh. xv. 21, 35.

^x 1 Chron. xi. 15.

the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. By the advice of the prophet Gad, who attended him, he went from the strong hold to the forest of Hareth, in the land of Judah^y. Meantime Saul sat under a tree or grove in the high place at Gibeah, fretful and anxious, upbraiding his officers, complaining that his own son had made a league with the son of Jesse, and that none of them would pursue, nor give intelligence concerning him. Then Doeg the Edomite, chief of the king's herdsmen, said, he had seen the son of Jesse at Nob, with Ahimelech, who consulted the Lord for him, and gave him bread and Goliath's sword. Whereupon the high-priest Ahimelech, with all the priests of his family, were sent for. Saul unjustly condemned them; and his footmen or trained bands refusing to slay them, Doeg, who was their accuser, became their executioner, killing eighty-five persons who had worn a linen ephod: Of which David bitterly complains^z. The Septuagint^a makes the number of the priests killed by Doeg the Syrian three hundred and five; and Josephus^b three hundred and eighty-five: Which is a strange mistake or contradiction to the Hebrew text. Nob the city of the priests was destroyed and plundered; and thus were fulfilled the threatenings against the house of Eli, of whom Ahimelech was descended; only Ahitub, called also Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, escaped the slaughter, and fled to David, with whom he was in safety.

Though David was so unjustly pursued, yet he ceased not to do good to Israel; for hearing that the Philistines fought against Keilah, a city belonging

^y 1 Sam. xxii. ^z Psal. lii. ^a Acta. Basilicæ, xlii. 18. ^b Antiq. lib. 6. cap. 14. p. m. 196.

ing to the tribe of Judah^c, after consulting the mind of God; which he might know by Gad the prophet, and Abiathar the high-priest, who were with him, he went up, routed the Philistines, and entered the city^d. Saul being informed that David was in a city with gates and bars, resolved to besiege him; but David being aware of his danger, prayed to God for counsel, and caused Abiathar, who had the high-priest's ephod, with the urim and thummim, which, it seems, he brought out of the tabernacle, when he fled from the slaughter made by Doeg, consult the case; and the Lord told him, that if he staid there, Saul would come, and the men of that city would deliver him up. Wherefore he retired to the wilderness of Ziph, where he had, in a wood, an interview with Jonathan his friend who gave him great encouragement. The Ziphites discovered his lurking-place to the king; upon which occasion David penned the fifty-fourth psalm. Saul closely pursued him, but Providence gave a diversion; for the Philistines were invading the land, and perhaps that part of it where Saul's estate lay; which obliged him to return and defend his own. No sooner was the war with the Philistines over, but Saul returned with three thousand chosen men, to pursue David in the wilderness of Engedi^e, upon the rocks of the wild goats. By the way he went in *to cover his feet*; that is, to sleep in a cave: For this sense doth agree to the history, 1 Sam. xxiv. 3. and Judges iii. 24. where the expression is only used. Saul being old, and weary with incessant pursuit of the Philistines and David, want-

ed.

^c Josh. xv. 44.

^d 1 Sam. xxiii.

^e 1 Sam. xxiv.

ed rest, and God disposed him thereto, that David might have occasion to shew his integrity; and the season being probably hot, he might chuse to sleep in a cave, for the benefit of a cool shade. David and his men remained in the sides of the cave, when Saul came into it. Nor is it incredible that the cave could hold so many persons; for Strabo^f, that accurate ancient geographer, writes of one in Judæa, that would contain four thousand men: And Josephus^g tells us of several caves in that country, where the Trachonite thieves, with their whole families, lodged, in the reign of Herod the Great. David's men observing Saul fast asleep, persuaded their master to kill him; which he refused, and only cut off the skirt of his robe; for which his heart smote him: Perhaps because he had some secret thought to do more, but he overcame it. Saul being gone out of the cave, David followed him with a warm and pathetic speech; wherein he remonstrated to the king, his father-in-law, that he was in the wrong to suffer himself to be imposed upon by evil counsellors, to persecute his own son, who was so far from wishing him hurt, that just now, when it was in his power to kill him, had only cut off the skirt of his robe. Saul made an affectionate and penitent reply, owning that it was unjust to pursue David as an enemy, who had shewn such an act of generosity; that he knew the kingdom of Israel would be established in his hand, and desired him to swear, not to extirpate his race: Which he having sworn, they at that time parted in peace; yet David did not think fit to trust him, but retired to the hold for safety.

About

^f Lib. 16 p. 756. ^g Antiq. lib. 14. cap. 27. p. 502.

About this time the prophet Samuel died, near two years before Saul^a, and all Israel lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah¹. When they saw the disorders of Saul's reign, they had great reason to lament their loss of Samuel, and their sin in rejecting so great a prophet, and so good a magistrate, and to do him honour at his burial. David retired to the wilderness of Paran, and sent some of his retinue to ask provisions of a rich man, called Nabal, who was then shearing his sheep; of which he had three thousand in Carmel. Nabal gave them a surly answer, and refused their demand: Whereupon David marched with four hundred men armed, on a rash design, to cut off all the males of this man's house; but was happily prevented, by the good address and valuable presents of Abigail, Nabal's wife. In the meantime Nabal was rioting at home in luxury and drunkenness; but being informed of the danger he had escaped, his heart sunk within him, and he died in ten days. Dr. Lightfoot^k is of opinion, that the fifty-eighth psalm hath a relation to him. When he was dead, David married his widow; he also took to wife Ahinoam, the daughter of Jezreel: (but Saul had given Michal, David's first wife, to Phalti, or Phaltiel, the son of Laish.) By the corrupt custom of those times he ventured on polygamy, though *from the beginning it was not so*; nor must it be so now, when our Lord has reduced this law to the primitive institution¹. The troubles of David from Saul being intermitted a little, returned again, like the clouds after the rain. The Ziphites were so officious, as to inform Saul at Gibeah

^a Lightfooti Chronica, p. 28. ¹ Sam. xxv. ^k Chronica Temporum, p. m. 58. ¹ Matth. xix. 4, 5.

Gibeah of David's motions^m: Whereupon he marched with three thousand men, to take or destroy his supposed adversary. David, who was then in the desert, observed Saul's camp, and went into it with his friend Abishai, the son of Zeruiah. By Providence they found Saul and all his men fast asleep; whereupon Abishai desired permission to nail him dead with one stroke. But David would neither lift up his own hand against the Lord's anointed, nor suffer another to do it; chusing rather to wait God's time to bring him to the crown in a more honourable way. Only he took away the spear and the cruse of water from the king's bed-head. Then David got up on a hill on the other side, and thence called to Abner, the captain of Saul's guards, bantering him and his men for taking so little care of their sovereign, as to suffer his supposed enemy to take away his spear and cruse that was at his bolster. Saul being overcome by David's generosity, made a confession of his folly, in persecuting so kind a man, and went home. Nevertheless, David fearing that Saul's mind would change, and that one day or other he would perish by his hand, withdrew, with his whole family, and his six hundred men, under the protection of Achish the king of Gathⁿ. This was weakness in so great a man, to leave the land of Israel and the tribe of Judah, where he had hitherto been safe, without consulting God, and to put himself under a heathen king, where he had formerly been in great danger. While David was in the land of the Philistines, he sought some town in the country to dwell in, and Achish gave him Ziklag,

^m 1 Sam. xxvi.ⁿ 1 Sam. xxvii.

Ziklag, where he staid the most part of sixteen months. This was a city given to the tribe of Judah at the first partition^o; afterwards it was yielded to the Simeonites^p, but was either never subdued, or had been taken from them by the Philistines; but David having got possession of it, annexed it to the crown of Judah. From thence he went up and invaded the Geshurites, the Gezrites, with the Amalekites, and utterly destroyed them, bringing away all their spoil, and leaving none to tell tidings of their overthrow. The action itself cannot justly be condemned, because those nations were among the enemies of Israel, doomed to ruin: yet David's dissimulation with Achish, in telling that he had taken the booty from the south of Judah, cannot be altogether justified.

Preparations were making for a war between Saul and the Philistines^q: The latter pitched in Shunem, a town far from their own country, being as far north as the tribe of Issachar^r. Saul mul-tered his men in Gilboa, an adjacent mountain. When he observed the army of his enemies more numerous, better armed, and in better heart than his own, *he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.* Having provoked God to forsake him, his interest failed among the military, and a guilty conscience made him tremble, as a leaf shaken with the wind. In this distress, *he enquired of the Lord, who answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.* Wherefore finding no comfort, either from heaven or earth, he resolved to knock at the gates of hell; for he said to his servants, *seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit,*

VOL. II. N that

^o Josh. xv 31. ^p Josh. xix 5. ^q 1 Sam. xxviii. ^r Josh. xix 18.

that I may go and enquire of her. His servants were so officious, as to recommend such a one at Endor, a city in the neighbourhood; and the king himself, went to her in disguise in the night-time, with only two men waiting on him, desiring her to divine, by calling up the ghost of such a one as he should name, what events would befall him, promising by an oath that no punishment should happen to her for so doing. This was a grievous sin in Saul, even necromancy, seeking *for the living to the dead*; forbidden by the law¹, and afterwards declared against by the prophets². It was a contempt of the God of Israel, as if any wicked creature could do him good, when God had left him. It was acting contrary to his own statutes, whereby he had *put away those that had familiar spirits, and wizards out of the land*. And it was a sin which God punished in him by death³. The wicked woman being stirred up by the importunity and promises made to her, called up her familiar, who appeared as an old man covered with a mantle; which Saul took to be the ghost of Samuel now dead. But in this the king was deceived, for it was not a good, but an evil spirit, since the apparition received worship from Saul⁴; which a good spirit would never allow of⁵. It did not reprove Saul for neglecting God, and consulting familiars; and it is absurd to imagine that the blessed saints, who are entered into peace in Abraham's bosom, should be disquieted by magic art. Nevertheless, by divine permission, as sometimes happened in the heathen ambiguous oracles, this spirit told him, that because he had not obeyed

¹ Deut. xviii. 10, 11. ² Isa. viii. 19. ³ 1 Chron. x. 13. ⁴ 1 Sam. xxviii. 14. ⁵ Rev. xix. 19, xxii 8, 9.

ed the voice of the Lord, God would deliver Israel with him into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow, or in a short time, he and his sons would be in the state of the dead. At hearing this voice, Saul having eaten nothing all that day, fainted away with weakness and fear; but the woman made ready a fatted calf she had in the house, and with the help of his servants over-persuaded him to eat: Whereupon he recovered strength, and returned to the camp.

When the Philistines went to the battle, Achish king of Gath, would have David and his men to march with them^a; for he having resided a year and four months in that country, and been many days at court, he had a good opinion of him. But the lords of the Philistines, lest David and his men should turn against them, persuaded their king to dismiss them. Where the wise and gracious providence of God appeared in extricating David out of these difficulties into which his own weakness had thrown him, by fleeing into the land of the Philistines; for if he had gone to the battle, he must have been, or been thought to be a traitor to the one or other side. But being delivered from this snare, he had a happy opportunity to recover his own and his all from the Amalekites. In going or coming, some of the tribe of Manasseh, who were men of renown, and had no mind to go with Saul against the Philistines, joined David^a, and were very useful to him. He being thus dismissed, found the city Ziklag burnt with fire, his wives, his men's wives, and their children carried captives by the Amalekites^b. In this

^a 1 Sam. xxix. ^a 1 Chron. xii. 19,—22. ^b 1 Sam. xxx.

this distress, the people's minds were so fretted with their loss, as they spake of stoning David. But *he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.* The believing consideration of the power and providence of God, who reduces his people low, and then raises them up; and the special promises of bringing him safe to the throne, supported him, and made him hope that his trouble would end well: Therefore he caused Abiathar the high-priest, consult God upon this question, *Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them?* And the Lord gave him an immediate gracious answer, *pursue, for thou shalt overtake them, and without fail recover all.* Upon this encouragement he marched with his men in quest of the enemy, leaving two hundred behind by the brook Besor. He went on with four hundred; and by an Egyptian slave, whom his master had left sick on the road, he found the Amalekites feasting and rejoicing on the spoil, and smote them from the twilight to the evening of the next day, so as there escaped not one of them but four hundred young men who rode upon camels and fled. He rescued his two wives, with all the spoil, and all that the Amalekites had carried away. Returning to Ziklag, he shewed justice and generosity in dividing the spoil, both to his soldiers who had been in the engagement, and to those, who, being faint, had staid behind; and sent presents to the cities and people among whom he had resided during Saul's persecution.

In the meantime, the Philistines fought against the children of Israel, and routed them^c. Jonathan

than, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons were killed: Himself being sore wounded by the archers, bid his armour-bearer kill him; which he declining, the king fell upon his own sword and died. His armour-bearer followed his example. Thus they became guilty of self-murder, contrary to the sound reason of a man, and to the religion of an Israelite. The country was put to such confusion that the people of the neighbouring cities fled to the other side of Jordan, and the Philistines dwelt in their room. The conquerors stripping the dead, found the bodies of Saul and his three sons. They cut off Saul's head, hung up his armour in the temple of Ashtaroath, and fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan. The men of Jabesh-Gilead either out of regard to his memory, who had seasonably delivered them from the Ammonites^d, or from a zeal to the honour of Israel, passing the fords of Jordan, took the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Bethshan, carried them to Jabesh, where they burnt them, or made a burning of perfumes for them, and gave them a decent burial; and fasted seven days to lament the present distracted state of Israel, and to pray for its speedy settlement. Thus died king Saul, after he and Samuel had governed Israel forty years^e.

§ 25. The second book of Samuel is entirely taken up with the history of king David's reign, his troubles and triumphs, and is called by the seventy interpreters the *second Book of the Kings*. In the first chapter, 'tis narrated, That David being returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites to Ziklag, on the third day thereafter a man

^d See p 75 ^e Acts xiii 21.

^{*} A. M. 2892. Ant. C. 1058.

man came and told him that he had escaped out of the camp; that Israel were overcome, Saul and Jonathan dead; which he knew full well; for as he passed mount Giboa, Saul, leaning on his spear, called him, desiring to be killed by his hand, because his life was yet whole, or his embroidered coat, as in the margin, had hindered the mortal thrust; accordingly he stood upon him and slew him, because he was sure he could not live; and took his crown and bracelets, which he brought to David. No doubt this bearer thought to get a reward for his news, these being gone who only could obstruct David's access to the throne. Most interpreters think the story of his killing the king false. Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion that it might be true: However David gave not this man the reward that he expected; but finding him to be an Amalekite, destined to destruction, and guilty of killing the king of Israel by his own confession, which is a sufficient mean of probation among all nations, he ordered him to be put to death, which was immediately done; and mourned, fasted and wept till the evening for Saul, for Jonathan his son, for the people of the Lord, and for the house Israel, because they were fallen by the sword; and penned an elegant poem or elegy suitable to the occasion. David's grief did not hinder him from the necessary care of public affairs: He ordered the men of Judah, his own tribe, to learn the art of war; and particularly the use of the bow, as was more fully recorded in the book of Jasher: Which being a collection of state poems, or civil history, not canonical, is now lost, without

without any prejudice to the sacred scriptures. And after receiving directions from the Lord, he went up to the city Hebron with his family, where the men of Judah anointed him king over their tribe^s. Being informed of the good offices the men of Jabesh-Gilead had done to the body of Saul and his sons, he sent them a kind message, thanking them for the honour they had done to the memory of his predecessor; thereby to shew that he was far from aiming at the throne from a principle of ambition or enmity to Saul, but purely because called of God to it; and since the house of Judah had anointed him their king, it would be wisdom in the rest of the tribes to concur in the choice.

In the meantime, Abner, the son of Ner, general and uncle to the preceding king, took Ishbosheth, who in 1 Chron. viii. 33. is called Esh-baal, the son of Saul, and made him sovereign over the other tribes of Israel, in opposition to David. He seems to have been but an indolent man, not fit to go with his father to the war, and only set up as a tool, that Abner might the better maintain his post of honour in the army, and his interest in the country, yet he reigned two years at Mahanaim before the beginning of the war with David, and five years after the war broke out; which removes the seeming difficulty in 2 Sam. ii. 10, 11. Abner excited a war between David's party, and that of Ishbosheth, wherein twelve of each side engaged; and running desperately against one another, were all slain. This resolved into a battle, wherein Ishbosheth's party were all put to the rout.

roul. Asahel, the brother of Joab pursued Abner, general of the other side, till Abner gave him his death's wound by a back stroke of his spear. At length Joab, on Abner's desire, founded a retreat; and upon a computation of the loss, it was found, that on David's side there were nineteen men and Asahel wanting; but on Abner's side there were three hundred and sixty killed. Hence ensued a civil war, wherein the house of David waxed stronger, and the house of Saul weaker^b; though, whosoever gain in a civil contest, the community is sure to lose. During the seven years David reigned at Hebron, he had by several wives six sons born to him, which strengthened his interest. At length Ishbosheth quarrelled Abner for debauching one of his father's concubines, which the general took in so ill part, that he resolved to bring all Israel into subjection to David, and entered into a treaty with him upon this important affair. David entertained the proposals very kindly, demanding only that Michal the daughter of Saul his first wife should be restored to him, which was granted, Phaltiel her former husband being obliged to part with her. But Joab being informed that David had allowed Abner to go in peace, called him back, and under pretence of a conference, villainously smote him under the fifth rib, that he died, in revenge for the blood of Asahel. David publicly declared, he had no hand in that murder, but abhorred it, and shewed his deep concern at Abner's death and burial. Indeed, he was at a loss for a friend to perfect the reduction of the tribes, which yet adhered to Ishbosheth:

But

But Providence did bring this about in a way the king had not in view; for Rechab and Baanah, two Benjamites, servants to Ishbosheth, murdered their master, as he lay asleep on his bed at noon, and cut off his head, which after travelling all night, they presented to David¹; who, instead of rewarding them as they hoped, caused them both to be put to death for their barbarous treason.

Ishbosheth being dead, all Israel owned David for their king, anointed him the third time, and entered into a covenant with him, after he had reigned seven years and six months at Hebron². The several tribes offered him armies for his support, and valiant officers to command them³. Jerusalem had fallen to the lot of Benjamin⁴, but joined close to that of Judah⁵. The children of Benjamin suffered the Jebusites to dwell there; and they increased, so as it became a city of the Jebusites⁶. The very first action then that David did, after he was anointed king over all Israel, was to gain Jerusalem out of the hands of the Jebusites. They mocked the assailants, saying, *The blind and the lame*; that is, their gods, who had eyes but saw not, and legs but walked not, *would defend their city*. Wherefore David offered preferment to those who should mount the top of the fort, and overthrow these *blind and lame which he abhorred*. This being done, the city was taken, which he enlarged, and fixed his royal seat there. Hiram king of Tyre, sent messengers to congratulate David's accession to the throne, and to offer

VOL. II.

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¹ 2 Sam. iv. & 1 Sam. v.

² A. M. 2900. Ant. Chr. 1050.

³ 1 Chron. xii. 23.—40.

⁴ Josh. xviii. 25, 26.

⁵ Josh. xv. 8.

⁶ Judges i. 21. 212. 17.

fer him materials and workmen to build him a fine house, which he accepted of. His family multiplied; yet it might have been as well with David, by taking only one wife at a time, as so many. By one wife Adam peopled the world after the creation, and by one Noah replenished it after the flood. The Philistines envied his prosperity, and came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim near Jerusalem. David, after consulting the Lord, marched out against them, and the Lord *delivered them into his hand*. He smote them, and gave God the glory, saying, *The Lord had broke in upon his enemies like a breach of waters*; wherefore he called the place, Baal-perazim. There they left their images, which David and his men burnt. He had another engagement with the same enemies near the same place; where the Lord gave him sensible signs of his presence, directing him to come behind them, when he heard a sound on the top of the mulberry trees. This being done, he smote the Philistines from Geba unto Gazar, which is near to their own border.

David being fixed on his throne, thought it his duty to bring up the ark from the house of Abinadab to Jerusalem; to that end he gathered thirty thousand men^p, the nobility, elders and officers, with many of the people, came^q to give this sacred symbol of the divine presence an honourable attendance, at one of the three great festivals, as some conceive^r. This might possess young Israelites, who had perhaps little heard of the ark of God, with a mighty veneration for it, when they saw the king, and so many of the best

of

^p 2 Sam. vi. ^q 1 Chron. xiii. 5. ^r Lightfooti Chronica temporum & ordo textuum. p. m. 62.

of the nation waiting on it. They expressed their joy with instruments proper for the occasion; And Dr. Lightfoot^s is of opinion, that then David penned the sixty-eighth Psalm, because it begins with the prayer of Moses, when the ark set forward^t; and in the psalm itself^u, there is mention of singers and players on instruments, with the princes of the several tribes who attended: And 'tis probable that these words in the last verse, *O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places*, were added upon the occasion of the death of Uzzah. Notwithstanding the great joy among the people, they were guilty of an error in putting the ark into a cart, after the manner of the Philistines; whereas, according to the law of Moses^x, the sons of Kohath, who were doubtless there, should have borne it upon their shoulders. The first error occasioned a second, *Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error, and there he died*^y. If any think the punishment severe for such a crime, let it be considered he was but a Levite, who are expressly forbidden *to touch any holy thing lest they die*^z. God, who saw Uzzah's heart, with the presumption and irreverence of that action, is best judge of offences of that nature. He did think fit hereby to strike an awe upon the thousands of Israel, to convince them that the ark was not the less venerable for being long in mean circumstances; and to teach all to approach God with reverence and holy fear; for
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^s Chronica temporum & ordo textuum. p. m. 62.^t Numb. x. 35.^u Psal lxviii. 25, 27.^x Numb. vii. 9.^y 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7.^z Numb. iv. 15. xviii. 3.

no good intention will justify a bad action. David perhaps repented this stroke too highly, when on this account he would not carry the ark to Jerusalem, but left it in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, who gave it a kind reception, to learn us to welcome God's ordinances. They should not be the less precious in our eyes, because to some they are a stone of stumbling. There the ark staid three months; and the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had. Piety is the best friend to prosperity. Josephus^a tells, that Obed-edom grew rich, and his worldly goods mightily increased, after this kind entertainment he gave the ark. The king being informed of the prosperity of this Levite, took care to bring the ark home to his own city with great pomp, rectifying the former mistakes. He caused the Levites to be sanctified, to bear the ark upon their shoulders^b, conformable to the law of Moses; himself danced before the ark in a linen ephod, brought it to a convenient place prepared for it, offered abundance of sacrifices, and all the people feasted and rejoiced. David having blessed the congregation, returned to bless his own house, to offer up his family thanksgiving for this national mercy; only Michal his wife, the daughter of Saul, upbraided him for undervaluing himself by dancing before the ark. He vindicated himself; shewing he had done so to glorify God, who would never suffer this to be his dishonour: But the Lord gave her a sharper rebuke, for she had no child to the day of her death. The public entry of the ark into the tent prepared for it, was such a remarkable

^a Antiq. lib 7. cap. 4. p. m. 220.^b 1 Chron. xv.

able piece of reformation, as David dismissed the people with a solemn blessing in the name of the Lord, celebrated a feast, appointed Levites to attend and minister before it, and delivered to the hands of Asaph several psalms to be sung on this occasion^c, where the Psal. xcvi. with a part of the cv. cvi. and cxxxvi. are inserted as the matter of this thanksgiving.

This king's pious intention did further appear, that *while he sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies^d*, he designed to build a fine house for the ark, and the decent administration of public divine worship. This resolution he communicated to Nathan the prophet, who at first approved it; but next night Nathan received a gracious message from God, signifying, that he approved the purpose, but countermanded the performance. David was a man of war; he must enlarge the borders of Israel by carrying on their conquests: He was a sweet psalmist, to prepare hymns for the use of the temple when built, and settle the courses of the Levites; but for building the house, the genius of his son shall lie more that way, and he shall have a richer treasure to do it. The Lord also promised the entail of the rich blessings of the covenant upon David's family, some of which were more eminently accomplished in the promised Messiah, the son of David, as may appear by comparing 2 Sam. vii. 13, 14. Psal. lxxxix. 26, — 29. with Luke i. 32, 33. Heb. i. 5. This message being intimated to David, he in a humble prayer thankfully accepted the divine promises, and earnestly looked for their performance.

David

^c 1 Chron. xvi. 1, — 36.

^d 2 Sam. vii. 1 Chron. xvii.

David having first taken care to promote the reformation of religion as far as capable, his other affairs prospered the better: For we are told * how he subdued the Philistines, taking Metheg-ammah out of their hands. They had kept a constant garrison upon the hill Ammah, and used it as Metheg, a bridle upon Israel: Now David took it, and made it a curb against themselves. They had been for a long time oppressors of Israel: Samson had begun a deliverance; Saul gained no ground; but David completely subdued them. He also smote the Moabites, and made them tributaries: Two-thirds he destroyed, casting down their strong holds, and putting the people to the sword; the other third he spared, to till the ground. Thus he *mete out the valley of Succoth*†, and made the Moabites for a long time incapable to be dangerous enemies to the church of God. David also smote the Syrians, or Aramites. Of them there were two kingdoms, as in the title of the sixtieth Psalm; Aram-Naharajim, or Syria of the rivers, whose chief city was Damascus; and Aram-Zobah, which reached to Euphrates. The king of Zobah going to enlarge his borders towards Canaan, David took from him *a thousand chariots, seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand foot*, 2 Sam. viii. 4. but in 1 Chron. xviii. 4. they are called *seven thousand horsemen*. If the Syrians divided their horse by ten in a troop, as is probable, then the officers were seven hundred, but the horsemen seven thousand; which reconciles these two texts. David houghed the horses, to make them unserviceable in war, and reserved for himself only a hundred chariots.

* 2 Sam. viii.

† Psal. lx. 6.

chariots. The Syrians of Damascus coming to succour the king of Zobah, fell with him, two and twenty thousand of them being slain in the field. David having overcome their armies, put garrisons in the chief towns, and made the country tributary to Israel all the way to Euphrates; for so far did the land extend that was conveyed to Abraham and his seed by divine grant^a. He took the shields of gold which the Syrians had, and exceeding much brass out of the conquered countries, and brought all to Jerusalem, to be employed afterwards in building the temple. Toi, king of Hamath, hearing of this success, sent his own son to King David, to return him thanks for breaking the power of his formidable enemies, and to present him with vessels of gold, silver and brass: All which he dedicated to the Lord, and were also employed for building the temple; as a token that the Gentiles should, in the fulness of time, bring their gifts to the new Jerusalem. These victories got David a great name; which increased, when either under his own conduct, or that of Abisbai, one of his generals, he killed of the Edomites eighteen thousand men in the valley of Salt^b. And in another engagement, Joab killed of the same people, near the same place, twelve thousand; as the title of the sixtieth Psalm bears. He put garrisons over all Edom, and made the whole country his servants and tributaries. So universal was the destruction, that Joab killed every male in Edom, and was obliged, by his own army, to bury the slain: Only Hadad, a young child of the seed-royal, was carried into Egypt by those who fled; where

^a Gen. xv. 19. ^b Compare 1 Sam. viii. 13. with 1 Chron. xviii. 12, 13.

where he was educated, and married to the king's daughter, till many years after this he returned, and became an enemy to Solomon¹. But we are not to suppose, that the conquest of the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians and Edomites, were all made in one year, though recorded in one chapter. Dr. Lightfoot² assigns ten years thereto, from the tenth to the twentieth year of David's reign; during which time many battles might be fought: Yet I do not see we are obliged to fix a precise number of years, since the sacred history doth not digest these events by way of annals. But it is certain the success was very great: And David, in the sixtieth, and hundred and eighth Psalms, gives all the glory to God, to whom it is due.

About this time, David having rest from war, enquired, *Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake*¹? Whereupon Ziba, a servant of Saul, told him, *There is yet a son of Jonathan, named Mephibosheth, [in 1 Chron. viii. 34. he is called Merib-baal, and his posterity are there recorded] lame of both his legs, who liveth at the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, of Lo-debar, (who seems to have been a rich man in Gilead, on the east side of Jordan, so generous, that he afterwards entertained the king himself^m, flying from his son Absalom.)* On this information, David sent for Mephibosheth, took him under his protection, restored to him the paternal estate that once belonged to Saul his grandfather, ordered that he should dine at the king's table, and appointed Ziba his steward, who knew the estate, and how to make the most of it. At this time

¹ 1 Kings xii. 15.—23. ² Chronica Temporum, p. m. 63. ¹ 2 Sam. ix. ^m 2 Sam. xvii. 27.—29.

time Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha; whereby it seems to have been about the twentieth year of David's reign when this kindness was shewn to Mephibosheth; or he was but five years old when his father and grandfather were killed^a.

Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon, being dead, probably the same whose army Saul destroyed^o; and who, out of hatred to Saul, had shewn kindness to David in the day of his distress; in requital of these favours, David sent messengers to Hanun, the son of Nahash, to condole his father's death, and to comfort him. But Hanun, being persuaded by his ministers that David had only sent them as spies, to look out some advantage whereby they might overthrow their city, caused one side of the beards of the ambassadors to be shaved, and one half of their clothes to be cut off down to their thighs, and sent them back to their master in this condition^p. This way of mourning was contrary to the Jewish law^q, and made the messengers contemptible^r, the Israelites wearing no breeches: Wherefore the men were ashamed; and their sovereign sent to tell them, that he would concern himself in their quarrel, and soon revenge it. The Ammonites being sensible of their danger, occasioned by their insolence, made preparations for war, by hiring twenty thousand Syrians, one thousand from the king of Maacha, and twelve thousand of Ishob; in all thirty-three thousand auxiliaries. David sent all his army against them, under the command of Joab and Abishai: The former routed the Syrians,

VOL. II.

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and

^a 2 Sam. iv. 4. ^o 1 Sam. xi. ^p 2 Sam. x. 1 Chron. xix. ^q Lev. xix. 27. Deut. xiv. 1. ^r Isa. xx. 4.

and the latter the Ammonites. Hadarezer the Syrian hearing that Joab had dismissed his army, assembled his forces, and sent them out of Mesopotamia, under the command of Shobach, passed the Euphrates, and encamped at Helam, on the south side of the river. David, being informed, assembled the ablest men of Israel, marched towards the Syrian army; which he might do with greater assurance, being, by his former wars, master of Damascus, and also of Thadmor, or Palmira, which was but one day's journey from Helam and the river Euphrates*. Having reached the Syrians, he routed them in battle, slew seven thousand men who belonged to seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand other soldiers, horse and foot; as appears by comparing 2 Sam. x. 18. with 1 Chron. xix. 18. Shobach, the Syrian general, was killed; and David came off victorious. Several petty princes, who had served Hadarezer, became tributaries to David; and the Syrians made peace with him. Thus the promise made to Abraham, Gen. xv. 18. and repeated to Joshua, Josh. i. 4. That the borders of Israel should extend to the river Euphrates, was at length accomplished. Though the Syrians were subdued, the war with the Ammonites was not ended. David having routed their armies in the field, so soon as the season of the year permitted, sent Joab with fresh forces, who laid their country waste, and besieged Rabbah, their chief city. He gave notice of the particulars of the siege to the king, then at Jerusalem; who having given necessary orders, and marched in person against it, the town was taken

* Raleigh's History of the World, part I. p. 410.

taken and destroyed; their king's crown (weighing, or in price a talent of gold, including the precious stones) was taken, and set on David's head: Very much spoil was carried out of the city, and the people ruined, perhaps with too great rigour, when put under saws, and harrows of iron^t; Which seems to have been done, while the king's heart was hardened by his sin in the matter of Uriah; of which by and by. This siege Dr. Lightfoot^u places in the twenty-sixth year of David's reign.

In the rest of David's life there are many blots, which are recorded to shew that the scripture is not writ to serve any party, but for our learning; that *he who thinks he stands, may take heed lest he fall*. He being at ease, though in time of war, saw from the roof of his house, a beautiful woman, named Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam^x, or of Ammiel^y, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and one of the king's worthies. Upon sight he fell in love with her, sent for her, and got her with child; which she acquainted him of. Much may be said to aggravate this sin, little to extenuate it; only it was not his ordinary practice, being guilty of it but once. None then ought to encourage themselves in iniquity by this example, but rather should be excited to a holy jealousy and watchfulness, lest they offend. David being not yet penitent for this trespass, sent for Uriah to father the spurious brood upon him; but this project failing, by Uriah's firm resolution not to go to bed with his wife, the king, in a day or two, sent him to the camp, with a letter to Joab; wherein

^t See 2 Sam. xi. 2. with xii. 26,—31 and 1 Chron. xx. 1,—3. ^u Chronica Temporum, p. 64. ^x 2 Sam. ii. 3. ^y 1 Chron. iii. 5.

wherein he ordered Uriah to be set at the head of a party of the besiegers, where the service was hottest, so that he might be forsaken and killed. The general exactly executed the king's command with the designed success, and signified the same by an express courier. Bathsheba bewailed the death of her husband; and so soon as the mourning was over, the king brought her into his own house, and married her. She bare him a son; but the thing David had done displeased the Lord, who suffered him not to go impenitent, but sent Nathan the prophet to him; who, by a parable well-suited to the occasion, made David to pass sentence against himself, and then plainly told him, *Thou art the man.*—*Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon².* For those sins the prophet denounced judgments: *The sword shall never depart from thy house,* pointing at the slaughters that should be among his children, Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah; his posterity for most part engaged in war; his children should be his grief, and his wives his shame, when, by an unparalleled villany, they should be publicly debauched before all Israel. Then David made a penitent confession: It was indeed long delayed, for the child, sinfully begot, was then born³; and during that time his comforts and exercise of grace had been suspended: But his repentance was sincere, as recorded in the fifty-first Psalm, and his pardon was declared: *The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt*

not

² 2 Sam. xii 7,—11.³ 2 Sam. xii 14.

not die. Thou shalt not come into condemnation, thy iniquity shall not be thy everlasting ruin; yet God shewed his displeasure, for the infant sickened; and though David fasted and prayed for sparing him, the child died on the seventh day: And David submitted to the divine disposal, and had another child by Bathsheba, named Solomon.

The evils denounced by Nathan against David for his sin soon began to be accomplished: Mischiefs arose out of his own house; for Amnon, the king's son, having decoyed Tamar, his beautiful sister by the same father, into his house, committed a villanous rape upon her. 'Tis like he had been accustomed to lewd practices before, and therefore at this time gave a full license to his brutal passion. Absalom, another of the king's sons, brother to Tamar by the same father and mother, being informed, resolved to revenge the injury done to his sister. With this view, after asking the king's leave, he invited all his brethren to an entertainment, and ordered his servants to kill Amnon, while he was merry with wine; which they did ^b. It seems to have been David's fault that he was too indulgent to Amnon, and did not punish him according to justice immediately for his crime. But Absalom was also highly culpable, in causing kill his brother, when neither tried nor condemned by his judges; especially if the circumstances be weighed, that he did it when his brother was his guest; when merry with wine, without any warning or previous exhortations to repentance: And perhaps he thus removed his elder brother, to pave his own way to the throne.

David

David was mightily afflicted with the news, that all his sons were killed by Absalom; but this mistake was rectified by the suggestions of Jonadab the king's nephew, and by the sudden arrival of his sons in safety, who gave the true account of their brother Amnon's death: Which treacherous and barbarous murder put the king and all the court into real mourning. Absalom knowing the law would strike against him, fled to his mother's relations, and was entertained by his grandfather Talmai, king of Geshur for three years.

In the meantime the heat of David's displeasure being over, his heart began to warm towards Absalom, and only wanted a friend to court him to be reconciled, and point out the way how he might do it, without impeachment to the honour of his justice. Joab knowing this, and desiring to gain the affection of the heir-apparent to the crown, sent for a wise woman from Tekoa^c; who by a cunning speech endeavoured to convince the king, that in some cases the life of a murderer might be spared; and that he ought to bring home his banished, to whom all the kingdom had so great affection. Whereupon David gave orders to Joab, to bring Absalom home to live at his own house, but not to see the king's face. His return is placed by Dr. Lightfoot^d in the thirty-second year of David's reign. Absalom having staid two years at Jerusalem, without access to the king's presence, though he had the applauses of the people for his great beauty, and was better dealt with than he deserved, could not be satisfied without he were fully restored to favour, and to all

^c 2 Sam. xiv.^d *Chronica Temporum*, p. 66.

all his places at court. Joab declining converse on this subject, he caused his servants set the general's field of barley on fire, who being surprised with such a bold adventure, conversed with him, and went on his errand to the king, who was easily persuaded to a reconciliation; and to allow his son, after all the evil he had done, access to his presence.

Abshalom was no sooner restored to favour at court, but he aimed to be in the throne: He looked great, by preparing chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him^e, and endeavoured to instill into the people's minds a bad opinion of the present administration; as if the affairs of the kingdom were neglected: But if he were admitted to rule, he would be diligent and just in his management. And thus by a humble complaisant carriage, he stole away the affections of great and small. In a little time he broke out into open rebellion; for having asked and obtained leave of king David to go up and pay a vow at Hebron, he there caused proclaim himself king, and signified it to all the people: Whereupon many resorted to him. There is some difficulty about the date of these commotions: *It came to pass after forty years*^f. I humbly conceive, those forty years do commence from the time David was at first anointed king^g, in the reign of Saul, full six years before he was crowned king in Hebron. Thus the rebellion began in the thirty-fourth year of David's reign, as commencing after Saul's death, in the sixty-fourth year of the king's life, full six years before his death. During which time

^e 2 Sam. xv.^f 2 Sam. xviii 7.^g 1 Sam. xxi

time there is room enough to place the following events in his history. Though this epocha, of David's being anointed by Samuel, be less used now, yet it might be well known then, and therefore spoke of in the text last named as a thing notable. David being informed that the great part of Israel had owned Absalom as king, departed from Jerusalem with a number of valiant men attending him; the Cherethites and Pelethites, commanded by Benajah, with a regiment of Gittites, or Philistine proselytes, stuck close to him; and the common people expressed their sympathy for him: 'Zadok and Abiathar offered also to go along with him, with the Levites carrying the ark of God; but the good king being more solicitous for the safety of the ark, than for himself, sent them back, saying, *Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee: behold, here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.* He expected also the priests would serve his interest during his absence; particularly by sending him intelligence of his enemies motions and resolutions, by their sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, of whose prudence and fidelity he had good experience. David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went, being grieved for his son's unnatural rebellion, sent as a punishment for his sin in the matter of Uriah. All his company were deeply affected; and upon this occasion he seems to have penned and prayed over the third Psalm. Being told that Ahitophel had joined Absalom's party, whom he knew to be a cunning politician, David prayed, *O Lord, turn the*
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counsel into foolishness, and send his friend Hushai, the Archite, back to Jerusalem, to offer his service to Absalom; but in the meantime to use his best offices to countermine the counsels of Ahitophel, and to give notice of them.

David being a little past mount Olivet, Ziba, steward to Mephibosheth, came with a present of wine and provisions, and accused his master, that he staid at Jerusalem in hopes of being himself made king. Though the story was not very likely, that Mephibosheth's lame legs should climb to preferment; yet David hearkened so far to the flatteries of Ziba, as to make a rash grant in his favours; *Thine are all that pertained to Mephibosheth*^a. Being come to Bahurim, a town of the tribe of Benjamin, one Shimei, of the family of Saul, came out, heaped curses, and threw stones at the king. Abishai would have killed him, but David would not allow: He reflected on his own sins, bore his tribulation with patience; and Dr. Lightfoot¹ thinks, that on this occasion he penned the seventh Psalm. At length David entered Bahurim, and there refreshed himself, and the people that were with him. In the meantime Absalom and his party marched to Jerusalem; where Hushai the Archite saluted and complimented him, and was admitted among his counsellors. Ahitophel advised Absalom to go in unto his father's concubines, left to keep the house, that the people might cleave closer to him, perceiving there was no hope of reconciliation, after dishonouring his father in such a manner. This suited the young man's lewd inclinations, and he delayed not publicly

blicly to do it on the top of the house. But it was abominable, and (whoever advised it) it was to his ruin. It was the sin by which Reuben lost his birth-right; which the law of God declares a capital crime^k; And the apostle speaks of it as a villany not to be named among the Gentiles^l. Ahitophel next proposed to take twelve thousand men to pursue David that very night, and that *he would come upon him while weary and weak-handed, make all his people flee, smite the king only, and the whole country would submit to the young prince.* Absalom pleased the advice well^m; for it seems he was so bad, as to design no less than his father's death: But he would first consult Hushai the Archite, who dissuaded him from it, saying, it was to be feared that those who were with David, being valiant and desperate men, might defeat those sent against them; which might be of dangerous consequence to break the whole party: Wherefore he offered to gather all Israel from Dan to Beersheba, and then to fall on David where-soever he was, and ruin him. Absalom was so far infatuated, as to follow the last opinion: Of which Hushai gave notice to Zadok and Abiathar, bidding them hast away and advise David to pass Jordan with all dispatch. They sent Jonathan and Ahimaaz with the message; who having escaped the pursuers, by hiding themselves in a well, came and told David, who decamped by break of day, passed Jordan, and came to Mahanaim, a city of Gilead, where he was kindly entertained. About this time David seems to have penned the forty-second and forty-third Psalms:

Where

^k Lev. xx. 17. ^l 1 Cor. v. 1. ^m 2 Sam. xvii.

Where he encouraged himself, that notwithstanding that he was then banished from public ordinances, and under many discouragements; yet his hope is in God, *that he should yet praise him, as the health of his countenance, and his God.* And in the fifty-fifth Psalm he complains of his enemies; particularly in the thirteenth and fourteenth verses he seems to point out the perfidy of Ahitophel his counsellor; to whom he wishes many evil things, as an enemy to the public welfare. These desires were soon accomplished; for Ahitophel finding his counsel rejected, and his party going to ruin, went to his own city, where he had made his will, and then hanged himself.

David having increased his army, especially in the tribes beyond Jordan, which were not so soon debauched to Absalom's interest: And since his unnatural son advanced with a great host of rebellious subjects, he marshalled his own men under the command of Joab, Abishai, and Ittai the Gittite^a. He offered to go in person to the battle, but was over-persuaded by his officers to stay in the city Mahanaim, as more for their interest and his own. Not doubting of success, which he had prayed for and expected from his gracious God, he yet intreated his men to *deal gently with the young man, even with Absalom.* Where he rendered good for evil. To deal gently with an unthankful traitor, who hunted after his father's life and crown, was amazing pity; nothing can be found parallel to it, but our Redeemer's compassion, in praying for his murderers. The decisive action was in the wood of Ephraim, so called from some memorable

^a. 2 Sam. xviii.

morable deed of the Ephraimites there, though it lay in the tribe of Gad. The rebels were entirely routed, and twenty thousand of them slain: The wood devoured more than the sword; the pits, bogs, thickets, stumps and wild beasts, entangled and ruined the flying parties. Absalom was caught by the thick boughs of a great oak; his mule, on which he rode, run away, and he could not disentangle himself. In this posture, one of the servants of David saw him, and told Joab; who blamed the man, saying, *Why didst thou not smite him there to the ground, and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle?* By which it is like, he meant ten half-crowns in value, and a captain's commission, whereof the girdle was a badge. The man replied, he would have done it for no reward. It might have cost him his head, since the king, in his hearing, had charged the general officers; *Beware that none touch the young man Absalom.* However, Joab broke through the orders of too indulgent a father, smote Absalom dead, buried his body in a great pit in the wood, on which they cast a great heap of stones; and then founded a retreat, to spare the blood of Israel. Absalom's sons being dead before himself, his memory was preserved by a great pillar he had erected near Jerusalem, bearing his name. The war being over, Joab sent news of the event to the king by Cush (who might be an Ethiopian by birth, as his name bears, but an Israelite by profession) and by Ahimaaz, a priest: Yet the king was more grieved at Absalom's death, than delighted in the victory. Though his weeping may be excused in some measure, as being afflicted for his son's dying in his iniquity, without the least sign

sign of repentance; and that his own sin, in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba, had brought on the calamity of a civil war upon this kingdom: Yet his sorrow seems to have gone into excess, when he indulged it long, and declined to congratulate his soldiers returning victorious, from a battle where they had ventured their lives for his sake: For which Joab expostulated with him^o, perhaps, in terms too rough to be used by a subject to a sovereign. Yet they had this effect, that the king threw off his grief, and appeared in public, where his people came to him, and rejoiced in his and their own safety.

Israel being sensible of the folly of the rebellion, contended who should have the honour to bring the king home to Jerusalem. The men of Judah, by the management of Zadok and Abiathar the chief priests, appeared first for the restoration. The interest of Amasa, David's nephew, who had been Absalom's general, but was pardoned, and had the king's promise to command in the room of Joab, contributed to make them unanimous in their resolution. Shimei, who had cursed the king^p, came with a thousand-Benjamites to wait on him, and to ask pardon for his transgression, which David was so generous as to grant, though no doubt, the criminal was bound to his good behaviour, and liable to be prosecuted, if he afterwards miscarried. Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, went with the crowd to meet the king. He had been a sincere mourner during the rebellion, having never trimmed, nor put on clean linen, and was not a little grieved that Ziba his steward

steward had misrepresented him as one aiming at the kingdom, and thereby had got a grant of his estate. David hearing a true state of the case, ordered Ziba and Mephibosheth to *divide the land*, that the property should be in the latter as first ordered, but the former shall till the land and pay his master a rent. Ziba seems, indeed, to have deserved punishment for slandering his master^a; but David being now in the humour of forgiving, resolved to make every body easy; and the matter might be more fully considered afterwards. Old Barzillai waited on the king to the west side of Jordan: He had a fine seat at Rogelim in Gilead, where, being rich and liberal, he had provided David sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim. Wherefore the king, in gratitude, kindly invited him to go to Jerusalem; but Barzillai excused himself, that being now eighty years of age, he was not fit for the diversions of a court; it was more requisite that he should go home and prepare for eternity; only the king might take his son Chimham with him, and give him what preferment he pleased^r. This being agreed to, David and Barzillai parted with kind salutations and blessings. The men of Israel came out to pay their respects to the king; and objected to the men of Judah, that they had brought him home, without calling them to do him honour at his restoration, about which there passed some hot words, that occasioned a new insurrection.

For Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, but dwelling in the tribe of Ephraim, *blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance*

^a 2 Sam xvi. 3. ^r See Jer. xlii. 17. Dr. Patrick on 2 Sam xix. 38.

inheritance in the son of Jesse *. So every man of Israel went up after the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah clave to the king. No sooner was one of David's troubles over, but another arose out of the ashes of the former, to fulfil the threatening, *The sword shall never depart from thy house*. David being come to Jerusalem, purified his family; and on this occasion seems to have penned the thirtieth Psalm. He had multiplied wives contrary to law: Ten of his concubines, left to keep the house, proved a shame to him, when Absalom his son publicly debauched them; and therefore he now shut them up in prison during life. In the time of Sheba's rebellion, David prayed, Psal. lxxiv. as Dr. Lightfoot † thinks: And to crush this insurrection in the bud, he ordered Amasa, now his general, to raise forces, and directed Abishai to pursue Sheba with the guards. Joab, without orders, went with his brother; at Gibeon he met with Amasa, whom he treacherously killed; resumed his post as commander in chief, led on the army, and ordered the forces coming up to follow him. Sheba, the rebel, having rambled over all the tribes of Israel, found very few, upon second thoughts, willing to go into his measures; wherefore he was obliged, with a handful that joined him, to shut himself up in Abel-beth-maacah, a city in the tribe of Naphtali *. Their Joab besieged him, battered the walls, and made ready for a general assault, till a prudent woman, by her good address, both with the besiegers and besieged, so managed the matter, as the rebel's head was thrown over the wall: Whereupon

* 2 Sam. xx.

† 2 Kings xv. 29.

* Chronica Temporum & ordo Textuum; p. m. 67.

Whereupon Joab founded a retreat, and spared the city.

About this time there was a famine in Israel three years successively, which made it the sorer; though perhaps it was not extreme, only a great drought occasioned great scarcity of provisions, which is placed by the learned Dr. Lightfoot^x, in the thirty-sixth, thirty-seventh, and thirty-eighth years of David's reign. He enquired of the Lord concerning the grounds of the controversy; To which the Lord answered, *It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites*^y. These people had, by subtilty, made a covenant with Israel^z, whereby their lives were spared, but their liberties taken away; yet Saul cut off many of them; for what reason we are not told; perhaps to atone for his clemency to the Amalekites. David, 'tis like, by divine direction, referred to the Gibeonites themselves what satisfaction should be made to them for the wrong; and they desired seven of Saul's posterity might be put to death; which was granted. Blood is expiated by blood¹. The nomination of the persons being left to David, he spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, for the friendship and oath between him and his father, but gave up Armoni and Mephibosheth, the sons of Rizpah, one of Saul's concubines, with five of his grandsons, born by Merab, and brought up by Michal for Adriel, the Meholathite; whom the Gibeonites hanged in the beginning of the barley-harvest. Rizpah staid by the bodies, to hinder the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field from tearing them; and David caused their

bones,

^x Chronica Temporum, p. m. 68.

^y 2 Sam. xxi.

^z Josh. ix.

¹ Gen. ix. 6.

bones, with those of Saul and Jonathan, that were at Jabesh-Gilead, to be brought thence, and buried in the tomb of Kish, the father of Saul, at Zelah in Benjamin: *And God was intreated for the land.* When justice is done upon earth, vengeance from heaven ceaseth. Near the same time, David had war with the Philistines; four battles are mentioned in 2 Sam. xxi. 15,—22. The book of Chronicles, which takes no notice of David's sin in the matter of Uriah, nor of the troubles that followed upon it, nor of Absalom, nor of Sheba's rebellion, speaks of three of these battles^b. David had subdued the Philistines in the beginning of his reign, so as they could not bring any great numbers into the field; yet as long as they had any giants to be their champions, they never ceased, by their incursions, to disturb the peace of Israel. In one encounter David himself was in great danger by Ishbi-benob, a great giant, till Abishai succoured his prince, and slew the Philistine. The king seems now to have been in the sixty-eighth year of his life, and thirty-eighth of his reign; and considering the fatigues he had undergone, 'tis no wonder he waxed faint, though he did not flee. But the hazard he had escaped, made his men to enter into a resolve, confirmed by an oath, that he should go no more to battle, that *the light of Israel*, its guide and glory, might never be so near blown out. In the other engagements we have nothing memorable, but that three Philistines of gigantic stature, were slain by David's servants. The most powerful enemies, even death itself, shall be subdued at last by our blessed Redeemer, *through whom we are more than conquerors.*

David having overcome all his enemies, triumphed with a song of praise, recorded in 2 Sam. xxii. and with some little variation in the eighteenth Psalm. In the former we have it composed for his own closet; in the latter, as it was afterwards given to the chief musician for the service of the church, which may serve as a pattern of thanksgiving to the people of God in all ages; and might have been useful to this prince, both when God delivered him from the troubles raised by Saul in his youth; and also when God freed him from all his enemies, in his old age. For here he gives God the glory of his infinite perfections, triumphs in his interest in him, gives account of the great things God had done for him, makes sweet reflections upon his own integrity, and enlarges upon the pleasant prospects of kindness God had in store for all his saints, for himself, and for his seed for evermore; that is, our Redeemer, whose throne and kingdom shall only continue for ever.

David being old, finding his latter end approaching, indited his last will, which we may suppose he oft repeated for his own comfort, even to his last breath; and therefore is called his last words, saying, *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue: the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God, &c.* intimating, that not only these words, but also many other psalms and hymns uttered by him, are not to be looked upon as human inventions, but as words penned by the Spirit of God, the great teacher of the church; words wherein the ever-blessed Trinity concur,

concur, God the Father, the *God of Israel*; his Son our Redeemer, the *Rock of Israel*; and the Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, who *spake by the holy prophets, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.* Rulers among men, whether of David's posterity or others, must be just, to allow their people their rights and properties, to defend the innocent, to do right to those who are injured; to act as those possessed with the holy fear of God, teaching them to govern rational men with good laws: In so doing they shall prosper, and be a public blessing. The *Messias*, the son of David, shall be such a ruler among men, who shall order the affairs of salvation, and public worship according to his Father's will; and shall be acceptable *as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain.* Of this David makes comfortable application, saying, *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. This is all my salvation, and all my desire, though he make it not to grow: but the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, &c.* Where he tells, that though neither he nor his children had ruled and lived as they ought, and therefore have not enjoyed that uninterrupted prosperity; yet he comforts himself in this, that God had graciously been pleased to give him a sure covenant, to continue the kingdom to him and to his seed for ever^d, till the coming of the *Messias*, his son and successor, whose kingdom shall have no end. And in and through the *Messias*, his

his Saviour, God had in his everlasting counsel contrived a covenant of grace, which he had acquiesced in, which is so well ordered for the glory of God, and the salvation of his people, with all the means leading thereto; and shall be so firmly kept, that the very gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This was all his salvation, and all that he could desire, amidst all confusions and shakings that can happen. But the sons of Belial, who wickedly rebel against the covenant of God, as his successors should thrust them away as one would do pricking thorns, so God shall thrust them away, and cast them into the fire of his wrath.

As to the catalogue of David's mighty men, there are some differences between that in 2 Sam. xxiii. 8,—39. and that in 1 Chron. xi. 10,—47. which may be easily removed, if we consider, that nothing is more common than for one man to have divers names, and that as some of the worthies died, so others came in their room; which must make some alteration. Many of the actions ascribed to those eminent men, were done in David's younger years, yet are here inserted towards the end of his life; for the honour of the king, who trained up his servants in the art of war, setting them an example of conduct and courage in his own person; for the credit of those brave men who were instrumental to bring their master to the crown, and protect him in his government; to excite after ages to a generous emulation, and to shew that religion doth inspire men with true courage. All the saints of God have their names written in heaven, and there shall have their reward.

Near

Near the end of David's life, or two years before his death, he gave Joab orders to go through all the tribes from Dan to Beersheba, to number the people, and bring a report*. Joab made a humble remonstrance against it; but the king's orders were positive, and must be obeyed. Therefore Joab, with his assistants, began on the east side of Jordan, came about by the northern parts of Canaan, and returned to Jerusalem in nine months and twenty days, with an account, that there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand, Levi and Benjamin not being counted. David was soon convinced, and made a penitent confession of his iniquity; which seems to have consisted in this, that he went about this design without consulting God, out of a proud conceit of his own greatness, in commanding so many subjects; and from a vain confidence in his own strength, that being able to raise so many fighting men, he would be formidable among the nations. God, who knows best the demerits of sin done against himself, and discerns the principles from which men act, was very much displeased, and sent the prophet Gad to offer to the king's choice, seven years of famine, three months to flee before his enemies, or three days pestilence in the land, as a punishment for his iniquity: David said, *I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, (for his mercies are great) and let me not fall into the hand of man.* He could not think to have all his former triumphs stained, nor see the enemies of Israel behave themselves so proudly. According to his choice,

choice, the pestilence was sent; which, from the morning to the time appointed, consumed seventy thousand men. The king seeing the angel threaten to smite Jerusalem, renewed his confession, prayed for mercy to his people, and by the direction of the prophet, bought the threshing-floor of Araunah, or Ornan, a proselyte descended from the Jebusites, where he sacrificed burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. *So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed.*

There are some seeming differences between the history of this affair in the last chapter of Samuel, and that in the twenty-first chapter of the first book of Chronicles; which may be reconciled: For in the former it is said, *The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them, to say, Go number Israel and Judah.* There was too much cause for divine displeasure: Israel had been unthankful for their prosperity, and the blessings of David's government, and easily drawn to join in the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba: Wherefore, though God tempts no man to sin; yet, as a righteous Judge, he took occasion from this sin of David to punish the other iniquities of Israel. In the latter it is said, *Satan provoked David to number Israel.* The adversary of our salvation suggested this sin, and solicited to it, even as he put into the heart of Judas to betray Christ. There is another difficulty, by comparing 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. where the number of Israel given up by Joab is eight hundred thousand men, with 1 Chron. xxi. 5. where they are eleven hundred thousand. The reason of the difference seems to be, that in the former, the ordinary settled militia waiting on the king are omitted; which being twenty-four thousand for each month,

month^r, these in the whole year make two hundred and eighty-eight thousand; who, with twelve thousand officers and garrison-soldiers, make three hundred thousand. The Chronicles being writ to gather up fragments omitted in former books, the militia and the whole fencible men are there put together, which makes up eleven hundred thousand; and in the book of Samuel only the fencible men are numbered. There is another branch of this difficult; for in the forecited text in Samuel the men of Judah are called five hundred thousand, but in the Chronicles four hundred and seventy thousand. The reason of this difference may be, either that the garrison-soldiers, with those who attended the king, are in the former included, but in the latter excluded; or that though there were five hundred thousand when Joab gave up the sum to the king, yet thirty thousand of these died in the plague; which being deduced, the sum will remain as mentioned in the Chronicles. Besides, Joab was sick of the order for numbering the people, and the work was never perfected; which may make a diversity in the account. Another doubt is moved: Why in 2 Sam. xxiv. 13. is it said, *Shall seven years of famine come?* and in 1 Chron. xxi. 12. only *three years famine?* But there is here no inconsistency: For there were three years famine inflicted already, for the sin of Saul in killing the Gibeonites; which being, as before observed, in the thirty-sixth, thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth years of David's reign, and this now threatened being in the thirty-ninth year of the same reign, while the effects of the former were

were not over, three more years famine would make in all seven: Whereas in the book of Chronicles only the three years threatened for David's numbering the people are reckoned. The last difference that appears in this narrative, is, that in 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. it is said, *David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen, for fifty shekels of silver*; but in 1 Chron. xxi. 25. he is said *to give for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight*. The difficulty may be removed thus: In the first, he speaks of the price paid for the threshing-floor, the oxen and instruments; but in the latter, of what he advanced in his royal generosity for the whole place adjoining, on which the temple and its courts were afterwards built, in the room where Araunah, if not others, had their houses, barns and other apartments: The same place, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, where God stopt Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, by presenting a more proper sacrifice. There the Lord would have his temple built; and there sacrifices and oblations for many ages were made with acceptance on his altar.

The first book of the Kings begins with the last year of David's life and reign. These books were written by prophets, or holy men of God, living in or near the times wherein the things there recorded were done, and by some one of them digested into order. Whoever was the penman, they are a part of the holy scriptures divinely inspired, being as such delivered to us by the Jewish church, *to whom were committed the oracles of God*^s; owned in the New Testament, for the Apostle^h, quoting a passage out of them, calls it *scripture*, by way of eminence;

^s Rom. iii. 2.

^h Rom. xl. 1,—4.

eminence; and they have been received by the Christian church in all ages. It hath been a piece of honour often paid to crowned heads, to have their actions on record; but the history of these books hath this excellency, that it contains not only the affairs of Judah and Israel, but is indited by the Holy Spirit with a regard to the kingdom of God in those times, and will be useful, instructive and edifying to the church of God while the world remains.

To go on with the history of the last year of David's life: The Lord being pleased with the atonement he had made for his sin in numbering the people, gave intimation of the place where the temple should be erected: Wherefore the king was excited with vigour to set masons to work, and to make preparations for that great fabric. Meantime the king's health began to decline: Though his servants covered him with clothes, he got no heat; whereupon his physicians advised him to one Abishag, the Shunamite, a beautiful young woman, (whom he might take to be his concubine, according to the corrupt custom of those time.) Adonijah, the son of Haggith, seeing his father in this condition, prepared to succeed in the throne. Joab, the general, and Abiathar, the high-priest, joined with him; and he invited the king's sons with the king's servants to a great feast, at Enrogel; but Nathan, the prophet, Benaiah, the mighty men, or the king's guard, and his brother Solomon, he called not. Nathan, who knew God's designation, David's choice, and Israel's interest in the matter, alarmed Bathsheba,

VOL. II.

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and

and advised her to go to the king, to acquaint him of Adonijah's usurpation of his throne, promised to her son Solomon: Which she did; and the prophet came in the time of the conversation, and confirmed what she said. Whereupon David affirmed with a solemn oath that Solomon should succeed him, and ordered Zadok, the priest, Nathan, the prophet, Benaiah, with the king's life-guard and ministers of state, to mount Solomon on the mule the king used to ride on, to conduct him to Gihon, the ark and anointing-oil being there lodged, where Zadok and Nathan should anoint him, then sound the trumpet, and cry, *God save King Solomon*. The orders being immediately executed, the people of Jerusalem approved the choice by their acclamations and shouts of joy. Adonijah being informed of the whole by Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, while he and his guests had not risen from their entertainment. Each of them were afraid: Adonijah himself fled to the horns of the altar, (perhaps that one which his father had lately set up in the threshing-floor of Araunah) where he begged his life of his brother Solomon; who promised no harm should be done him, if he behaved himself well for the future.

The cloud that threatened a storm by Adonijah's usurpation being scattered, David recovered some vigour, so as to instruct Solomon, and to give him a charge concerning building the temple; to which he encouraged him by the call of God, and by the vast preparations he had made for that work. Notwithstanding the troubles in his reign, he had provided *one hundred thousand talents* of

of gold, a thousand thousand talents of silver; brass and iron without weight, timber, and stone, and workmen in abundance. The sum of the gold and silver is immense, and not easily to be reckoned; only I find interpreters on Exod. xxv. 39. and xxxviii. 24, 25. estimate each talent at three thousand shekels, or one hundred and twenty-five pound-weight. Now, supposing a pound of gold to be thirty-six pounds Sterling in value, and a pound of silver for pounds; one hundred thousand talents of gold will amount to four hundred and fifty millions, and a thousand thousand talents of silver will be five hundred millions, and the whole gold and silver will come to nine hundred and fifty millions Sterling: A prodigious sum! Yet I do not think it incredible, or that a talent signifies no more than a plate or an ingot, as some¹ have supposed: For David had many ways of enriching himself, and making a vast treasury, by the spoils taken from the Syrians, Moabites, Ammonites, Canaanites, Philistines and Edomites; which he consecrated to these pious uses^m. He seems also to have had a trade with Urphe, or Ophir. So says Eupolemus, cited by Eusebiusⁿ: Which is very probable; for having conquered Edom, and reduced it to be a province of his empire, he thereby became master of two ports of the Red-sea, Elath and Ezion-gaber^o, from which he might begin the business: And the three thousand talents of gold of Ophir which he gave to the house of God^p seem to have been gained that way. He had also a great deal of lands bordering upon Canaan, which he labour-

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¹ Henry on 1 Chron. xxii. 14. ^m 2 Sam. viii. ⁿ 1 Chron. xviii. ^o De
Præp. Evang. lib. 9. c. p. ult. ^p 1 Kings ix. 26. ^p 1 Chron. xxix. 3, 4.

ed by many captives taken in the wars^a, who were not able to redeem themselves; for we find^b that he had stewards and managers over his storehouses, tillage, vineyards, wine-cellars, olive-trees, herds and flocks; this being a mean whereby princes, in ancient times, gained treasures. Besides, the riches of the sanctuary itself, which could not be bestowed to a better use than building the temple, were exceeding great: For the tabernacle at Shiloh, or wherever it was, never having been plundered from the days of Moses to those of David, for above four hundred years, nor any use made of it; the same having no loss, but a daily increase, by the spoils taken in the war^c, by the dedicated things, and by the capitation-tax, called the *ransom of the soul*^d, at half a shekel each head: This in so many years, among so numerous a people, who in David's time were reckoned fifteen hundred thousand fighting men^e, would amount to an immense sum. David, in his court or in his wars, did not expend so much money as princes do in our time: Gold and money was then in greater plenty in the east, particularly at Jerusalem; nor was there such a demand for it as is now. So upon the whole, it is not incredible that he left such a vast sum to his son Solomon, to defray the expence of workmen, and all other necessities for erecting and adorning the temple, which was to be so magnificent. Finally, we are not to think that Solomon bestowed all the riches that his father left, upon building the temple; for we find that *after the house of the Lord was finished, Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated*;

^a Raleigh's History, part. i. p. 418, 419.

^b Numb. iii. 28.

^c Exod. xxx. 12.

^d 1 Chron. xxvii. 25,—32.

^e 1 Chron. xxi.

dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels put he among the treasures of the house of the Lord^x.

There they seem to have remained for most part, till the house was profaned by wicked kings^y, or taken and ruined by the Chaldeans.

David having given orders for erecting the temple, he (from 1 Chron. xxiii. to xxvi.) settled the method of the service, and put into order the offices and officers thereof; which he might do by divine inspiration, being a prophet as well as a prince. He distributed the priests and the Levites into twenty-four courses, which were of great use to direct the Jews in the regular management of their affairs, after their return from the Babylonish captivity: And he appointed the manner in which the singers and musicians were to attend and do their work. The excellent book of Psalms, wherein the sweet intercourse and communion between God and his people is described, their exercises, trials, experiences, duties, graces and attainments are explained, may here come in order of time, according to Dr. Lightfoot^z to be read. For besides the Psalms which bear David's name in the title, some of which have been before noticed, there are others justly ascribed to him in the New Testament, as Psalm ii. and xcv. in Acts iv. 25, 26. and Heb. iv. 7. And there are others of them which have not his name prefixed, as the lxxii. and cxxvii. which seem also to have been penned by him. And when we read that David, in the last acts of his life, appointed Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons under

^x 1 Kings vii. 51. and 2 Chron. v. 1. ^y Vide Villalpandum de templo, apud Walton in Prolegomenis p. 265. ^z Chronica temporum & ordo textuum, p. m. 71, &c.

der their direction, to be chief masters of music in the temple, we may think of these Psalms given them to sing, or composed by them for that end. There are twelve Psalms that bear Asaph's name, viz. Psal. l. lxxiii. — lxxxiii. There is only one, viz. the lxxxviii. that hath the name of Heman prefixed; who seems not to be the Heman who flourished in David's reign, but the son of Zerah, great-grandchild of the patriarch Judah, who lived while the Israelites were oppressed in Egypt^a: But the Psalms inscribed to the sons of Korah, namely, Psal. xlii. xlii. — xlix. lxxxiv, lxxxv. lxxxvii. 'tis like were directed to the sons of Heman in David's time; for Heman himself was of the posterity of Korah^b. The name of Jeduthun is prefixed to the xxxix. lxii. and lxxvii. Psalms. And there are others which have no title (for we are not to depend on these given to them by the Septuagint) which cannot with certainty be affixed to any time, but may as congruously be referred to this season as any other.

This good king not only appointed the singers in the temple; but also the Levites who were to be porters, treasurers, store-keepers, officers and judges in the country; and in 1 Chron. xxvii. we find how prudently he ordered the militia of his kingdom. He was a man of war from his youth, yet did not keep up a great standing army in time of peace; neither did he disband them all, to leave his country naked; and to suffer his subjects to forget the art of war; but maintained twenty-four thousand constantly in arms, who being changed every month under their proper officers

^a 1 Chron. ii. 6.^b 1 Chron. vi. 33. 37.

officers, made the whole militia to be 288,000, perhaps, about the fifth part of the able men in the country, ready to go to war upon any occasion. He also took care that every tribe should have its own prince or chief, according to the ancient order instituted by Moses in the wilderness; and he appointed stewards over his substance, and attendants upon his person. He had not many counsellors; but these he employed were men of great abilities; and he preferred the word of God to them all. *Thy testimonies are my delight, and my counsellors*^c.

He retained his sense of and concern for religion to his last breath; and being a little recovered of his illness, he summoned all his great men together, to make his last speech to them, as Moses, Joshua and others had done before him. At this occasion he stood on his feet, and addressed himself to them, with great tenderness and discretion^d, declaring the entail of the crown, and the honour of building the temple upon Solomon, charging them, *to keep all the commandments of the Lord.*—*And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind:—If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now, for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong and do it.* He gave him a model of the temple. Moses had a pattern of the tabernacle, and David of the temple, by the immediate hand of God; for it was to be a type of Christ the true temple of the gospel church, and of heaven the everlasting

^c Psal. cxix. 14.^d 1 Chron. xxviii.

ing temple. He encouraged him; *Fear not nor be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee, until thou hast finished all the work. The priests and the Levites shall be with thee, for all the service of the house.—Also the princes and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment.* Then David exhorted all the great men of Israel to contribute liberally for the building of the temple. He set them a good example, by advancing out of his own stores three thousand talents of the gold of Ophir^c, and seven thousand talents of silver to overlay the walls of the house, besides what he had laid up before. This he did, not as Papists build churches, to make atonement for sin, nor in commutation of penance; nor as Pharisees give alms, *to be seen of men*; but because he loved the habitation of God's house. The princes, the officers of the court, and of the army, followed his copy in giving generously. *All the people rejoiced, because with a perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord. And David the king also rejoiced with great joy*; and concluded the meeting with solemn prayers and praises to God. Next day, they sacrificed burnt-offerings and peace-offerings; and did eat and drink with great gladness, and made Solomon king the second time; and anointed him to the Lord to be chief governor, and Zadok to be priest. The first anointing had been more private during Adonijah's usurpation; this was more public, before a great assembly of Israel. Having thus taken care of the affairs of religion, and of his own house, and directed Solomon *to keep the charge of the Lord his God, to walk in his ways, to keep his*

his statutes and his judgments, and testimonies, that he might prosper in all that he did'. He also ordered him to punish Joab the son of Zeruiah, for murdering treacherously these two great generals, Abner and Amasa; and, not ashamed nor afraid of punishment, daringly wore the girdle and shoes stained with innocent blood, in defiance of the justice of God and the king. He had been too long reprieved, but he shall be reckoned with at last. He desired him not to forget kindness to the house of Barzillai, in gratitude for what favours they have shewn to the royal family during Absalom's rebellion; and to remember Shimei's crime in cursing the king. He had been allowed to live; but David knew that this wicked man's turbulent spirit would soon give occasion to his prudent son and successor to punish such a criminal capitally. David having then served his generation, by the will of God fell asleep, and was honourably buried, after he had reigned forty years*.

§ 26. Solomon having taken peaceable possession of the throne, soon established himself, by cutting off his enemies. Adonijah the son of Haggith had made bold pretensions, but was obliged to let them fall, and throw himself upon the king his brother's mercy, who dismissed him, upon his promise to carry as became a good subject. But the restless spirit of Adonijah put him upon a new project, which 'tis like Joab and Abiathar advised him to, even to seek Abishag, the late king's concubine, in marriage, so as upon that footing he might have some after-game for the kingdom; and prevailed with Bathsheba to solicit

VOL. II.

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* 1 Kings ii. 2, — 11.

* A. M. 2932. Ant. C. 1018.

the king her son for him. Solomon received his mother's address with all respect, according to the law of the fifth command, and promised to grant her petition, though it may be still understood, providing it be just and reasonable: But when he heard her soliciting for Abishag to be given to Adonijah, he demonstrated to her that this was a plot against the government: *Ask for him the kingdom also, (says he) for he is my elder brother, even for him and Abiathar the priest; and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.* He seems to have been informed that these three were confederated in a plot; wherefore he caused Adonijah to be put to death, banished Abiathar to Anathoth, a city of the priests^a; but spared his life, because he had been partner with his father David in all his afflictions. Thus the threatening against the house of Eli, more than eighty years before this^b, was fulfilled; for Abiathar was the last high-priest of that family, and Zadok, of the race of Phinehas, was put in his room. Being informed that Joab was fled to the tabernacle of the Lord, and was by the altar, the king ordered Benaiah the son of Jehoiada to go thither and kill him, not only for his conspiracy with Adonijah, but for the barbarous murders he was guilty of; and the king knew well enough, that by the law^c, a wilful murderer might be taken from the altar to die; no sanctuary could protect him. Joab being dead and buried, the king placed Benaiah over the army in his room. As to Shimei, Solomon sent for him, and confined him to Jerusalem, where all his actions might be viewed, prohibiting him

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^a Josh. xxi. 19.^b 1 Sam. ii. 30.^c 1 Exod. xxi. 14.

ever to go out of the city, as far as the brook Kidron, under the pain of death. He took his life upon these terms, submitted to the sentence, and swore to obey it^k; but two of his servants or slaves, having run away to Gath, three years after the prohibition, he goes after them, and brings them back, though seeking them he lost himself; for Solomon hearing of it, charged Shimei that he had broken his oath, and disobeyed the command of his sovereign: For which, and for all the wickedness he was notourly known to be guilty of against the late king David, he caused him to be put death. This was not done before the third year of Solomon's reign; but the whole story is put together in 1 Kings ii. that the reader may have a distinct view of Shimei's case all at once.

Having secured the government at home, by cutting off those who seemed designing to disturb it, Solomon took care to strengthen himself by alliances abroad, marrying the daughter of Pharaoh king of Egypt^l: By which means, he hoped to defeat the designs of his enemies, particularly of Hadad the Edomite, who seems about this time to have returned to his own country^m. The particular year of Solomon's reign when this marriage was concluded, is not determined in scripture; only that it was before the temple was built: For the sons of God to match with the daughters of men, hath been often of bad consequence; yet this bride is thought to have been a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and that her nuptials were typical of the espousals of the Gentile Church to Christ. *Solomon loved the Lord, walking*

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^k 1 Kings ii. 42. ^l 1 Kings viii. ^m 1 Kings xi 25, 22. See p. 107, 108.

in the statutes of David his father ; only be sacrificed, and burnt incense in high places : and he made a thousand burnt-offerings at Gibeon, where the tabernacle and the brazen altar made by Moses were. David, his father, ever adhered to the ark, as the centre of unity for every Israelite : In this, his son came short of him, when he sacrificed in the high places : Yet while he and the people worshipped God, only before the temple was built, and in other things acted conformable to the rule, the Lord graciously accepted their services, and overlooked their infirmities. At Gibeon the Lord appeared to him in a dream by night, desiring him to ask what he thought most necessary ; whereupon Solomon prayed for wisdom to govern so great a people. The Lord granted it, and promised also to give him riches and honour. The dream came by the inspiration of God, actuating grace in the king's soul, to make him desire this divine wisdom which his heart was so much set upon ; and the Lord gave it to him, so as none before nor after him was adorned with such a measure of knowledge in natural and political things, besides his other endowments. And he was so sensible of this favour, that he returned to Jerusalem, where the ark then was, and there offered sacrifices in abundance. An instance of his wisdom we have, in determining a case between two women that are called harlots : It is like they kept a public house, and that their children were begot in fornication, for their is no mention of their husbands appearing in their cause. Their case might have been heard before inferior judges, who not being able to determine, it was brought to the king, that all might admire his decision.

decision. One of those women had overlaid her own child; which she observing, stole away the living child from her neighbour, and laid the dead one in its room. Whereupon the question comes, To which of those women did the living child belong, for each of them laid claim to it? To find out the truth, Solomon commanded the living child to be cut in two, and one half to be given to each of the contending parties. The woman to whom the child really belonged, cried, *My Lord, give her the living child, in nowise slay it: but the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.* Whereupon the king ordered the living child to be given to the former, whose bowels of compassion discovered her to be the true mother. This wise judgment gained him the reputation of all his people. Wisdom made his face to shine, and was better to him than weapons of war.

Solomon not only excelled in wisdom, but also in wealth and prosperity. In 1 Kings iv. we have an account of the names of his ministers of state, many of whom had served his father David. He kept a magnificent table, his provisions for each day being very large, thirty measures of fine flour, sixty measures of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty oxen out of the pastures, a hundred sheep, besides venison, with fatted fowl, or fatted things, sufficient to entertain three thousand men at least. The purveyors for his household were many, his dominions were large, all the princes from the borders of Egypt to the river Euphrates paying tribute to him. Judah and Israel dwelt safely, in peace and plenty, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, all his reign. Never did the crown of Israel shine so bright as when Solomon wore it; for

for it was a glorious type of the kingdom of Messiah, answering the predictions of the seventy-second Psalm. Why? *The Lord did build the house, and the builders did not labour in vain*^a. He had forty thousand stalls of horses, and twelve thousand horsemen, 1 Kings vi. 26. but in 2 Chron. ix. 25, it is *four thousand stalls for horses*. The difficulty is removed, by observing, that in the last text the word *stalls*, in our version, signifies *stables*; each of which contained ten stalls, or divisions for ten horses; which makes up the forty thousand in the former. If all these were for state, and not for carrying on the service of his buildings, he seems to have transgressed the law^b, forbidding the king to multiply horses. He excelled all the men of the east, in Egypt, or in his time, for wisdom and understanding. Being a great moralist, he spake *three thousand proverbs*; though I do not take the book of Proverbs (of which afterwards) to be a part of them. He was a good poet: *His Songs were a thousand and five*; of which there is only one extant, called *The Song of Songs*, being divinely inspired. And he was an excellent natural philosopher, who discoursed of the nature of all trees, of beasts, fowls, creeping things, and fishes, discovering his great knowledge in the mysteries of nature. His court was the general rendezvous of philosophers, or lovers of wisdom, who came thither to light their candle at his lamp. This account may run through several years of his reign; but I humbly conceive Josephus is to be blamed for charging this great prince with the art of divination, or teaching to cure diseases and expel devils

^a Psal cxxvii.^b Deut. xvii. 16.

devils by charms^p. Josephus wrote about the time of the destruction of Judea by the Romans, when the degenerate Jews were in love with that wicked art; and therefore he thought Solomon could not be so wise and so learned a prince without the knowledge thereof.

The great work that Solomon was raised for, was to build the temple. Wealth and wisdom were given to him for that end. His father had extended the dominions of Israel, by his wars with the Syrians, Edomites and others, as far as promised to the seed of Abraham: Over which his son, reigning in peace and prosperity, had time, leisure, riches, skill, and other advantages for this and the like expensive structures. Still timber, stones and workmen were wanting: About which we have him treating with Hiram, king of Tyre^q. Josephus^r says, the original letters that past between those princes were to be seen in the Tyrian annals in his time. Though these records be now lost, the sum of the transaction is more infallibly preserved in the sacred scriptures, as a type of the Gentiles building up a church to God in gospel-days. Hiram sent an embassy to Solomon, to condole his father's death, and to congratulate his accession to the throne. Whereupon Solomon, by another embassy, signified his design to build the temple; desiring the Tyrian to furnish him with timber and workmen. Hiram consented to the demand, promising to cause cut as much cedar and fir as was necessary, in Lebanon, and send it by the Mediterranean sea from Tyre, in floats, to the port that lay most convenient for Jerusalem.

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^p Antiq. lib. 8. cap. 2. p. m. 257.

^q 1 Kings v. 2 Chron. ii.

^r Antiq. lib. 8. cap. 2. p. m. 258.

The bargain being concluded, Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat, and twenty measures of pure oil, year by year, 1 Kings v. 11. but in 2 Chron. ii. 10. it is twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, twenty thousand measures of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil. The whole may be made up from both; the books of Chronicles being writ to supply and complete the history in the books of Samuel and Kings;—or, in the first we have what Solomon at first offered, in the second what Hiram demanded, and Solomon at last granted. The price being agreed to, Solomon employed thirty thousand Israelites in the work, ten thousand of them being in the business at once; and one hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred, who seem most of them to have been strangers*, to be burden-bearers, workers in wood and stone, and overseers, in the mountains. The bargain was managed by prudent men and wise merchants on both sides. Tyre and Zidon had a great number of inhabitants, living by trade: Their country being narrow and barren, they were obliged for necessaries to the land of Canaan†. Lebanon being then, and to this day, overspread with timber, which might otherwise yield silks, Hiram could spare enough of wood: And he could not want the friendship of Solomon, who, by his father's conquests, having a great part of Edom, Syria and Arabia, to the Red-sea and river Euphrates, his tributaries and subjects, could easily have stopt the caravans of the Tyrians from carrying on their trade‡ through those parts, if they

* 2 Chron. ii. 17, 18. † See Acts xli. 20. Ezra iii. 7. Ezek. xxvii. 17.

‡ Raleigh's History, part 1 p. 309.

they had opposed them. On the other hand, Solomon furnished them with nothing but what his country could spare; and when the work was done, gave them only such villages as he pleased. The preparations for building of the temple being so far carried on, the work itself was begun, four hundred and eighty years after Israel's coming out of Egypt, in the tenth year of Solomon's reign *; which comes in under the next period.

§ 27. The greater part of the chronological questions that learned men have moved upon this period, have already been prevented and answered, in what hath been offered to explain the sacred history. These that remain shall not long detain us. The whole time; from Israel's coming out of Egypt, to the beginning of the building of the temple, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, is pinned down to 480 years, as before ^x observed. The particulars, with the proofs from scripture, are as follows: Moses, after the departure from Egypt, governed Israel 40 years ^y, Joshua 17, as before proved, Othniel 40 ^z, Ehud and Shamgar 80 ^a, Deborah 40 ^b, Gideon 40 ^c, Abimelech 3 ^d, Tolah 23 ^e, Jair 22 ^f, Jephthah 6 ^g, Ibzan 7 ^h, Elon 10 ⁱ, Abdon 8 ^k, Samson 20 ^l, Eli 40 ^m, Samuel and Saul 40 ⁿ, David 40 ^o, and Solomon, before the building of the temple, 4 years ^p. These being put together, make up the whole period of 480 years ^q; the time wherein Israel was oppressed being included,

VOL. II.

U

cluded,

* A. M. 2936. Ant. C. 1014.

^x See Vol. I. p. 281.

^y Numb. xiv. 33.

^z Judges iii. 10, 11.

^a Judges iii. 30.

^b Judges v. 31.

^c Judges viii. 28.

^d Judges ix. 22.

^e Judges x. 2.

^f Judges x. 3.

^g Judges xii. 7.

^h Judges xii. 9.

ⁱ Judges xii. 11.

^k Judges xii. 14.

^l Judges xv. 20.

^m 1 Sam. iv. 18.

ⁿ Acts xiii. 21.

^o 2 Sam. v. 4.

^p 2 Kings vi. 1.

^q 1 Kings vi. 1.

cluded, and sucked up in the years of the Judges who delivered them from that bondage, according to the common opinion both of interpreters and chronologers. Nor can it be otherwise: For before Othniel, Israel was oppressed 8 years^r, before Ehud 18^s, before Deborah 20^t, before Gideon 7^u, before Jephthah 18^x, and before Samson 40 years^v. These years being added together, make 111 of oppression; which, if joined to the years of the Judges, would make the particular years of the period far exceed the general: But being included in the time assigned to the government of the Judges, (as hath been before observed, in explaining the sacred history) the particular years and the general sweetly agree; and other things shall be observed by and by that confirm this opinion.

The most important difficulty in the chronology of this period, is, to reconcile the general sum, 1 Kings vi. 1. with the words of the Apostle, Acts xiii. 19, 20. *He divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges, about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.* For if there be 450 years from the division of the land of Canaan by lot, in the 7th year of Joshua's government, of which the Apostle seems to speak, to the government, or even to the death of Samuel; there must be many more than 480 in the whole interval, from the departure out of Egypt to the building of the temple. To remove this, several answers have been offered by learned men. Grotius, Bishop Usher and others, number these 450 years from the birth of Isaac unto the Judges, joining

^r Judges iii. 8.^u Judges vi. 1.^s Judges iii. 14.^x Judges x. 8.^t Judges iv. 3.^v Judges xiii. 1.

joining the words *μετὰ ταῦτα*, or, *after that*, in the 20th verse, to the beginning of the 17th; so as the sense might be, "From the chusing of our fathers, to the time of the judges, are four hundred and fifty years: For (say they) from Isaac's birth, to the departure of Israel out of Egypt, are 405 years; they wandered in the wilderness 40 years; 7 years thence their land was divided by lot: These years put together, make 452; which the Apostle, by a round sum, names 450." But the words of the Apostle seem not to bear this sense: For he goes on orderly; *God chose our fathers; he brought them out of Egypt; he led them in the wilderness forty years; he divided the land; and then, he gave them judges.* Dr. Whitby², and several before him, make the computation in another way: "The years of the Judges till Samuel are 339; the time of the tyrants, or oppressors, are 111; which, put together, makes 450. This is the computation of the Septuagint, of Josephus and the Jews; which (says the Doctor) St. Luke follows both in the Gospel and in the Acts." But neither doth this solution please; for the time of the oppression is included in the years of the Judges, and cannot enter as a separate article within this period of 480 years, as hath been before observed. I rather then incline to another way of removing the doubt, suggested by the Dutch notes and Mr. Pool's continuators on Acts xiii. 20. That the words *μετὰ ταῦτα*, *after that*, are to be connected with the end of the seventeenth verse, and the time to be reckoned from the departure out of Egypt to the death of Samuel the prophet, which

² On the New Testament, vol. I. p. 701, 702.

which will be 434 years ; which the Apostle, by a round number, calls *about* 450, as it is usual in all languages, when it is but a little less or more : And the Apostle does not intend to shew precisely how long the Judges ruled, but, when or about what time their government happened, and also to declare what a long time it took to gain to Israel a quiet possession of the promised inheritance, their sins withholding good things from them. After all, if we are not able to satisfy ourselves or others in any such chronological question, which doth not touch any article of faith, 'tis better to confess our own weakness, than to say that the original text is corrupted, and so derogate from the authority of the unerring rule of faith ; as Lewis Capel, Isaac Vossius and some others have done ; who have been more fully answered by the great Buxtorf^a, and our learned countryman Mr. Baillie^b : And Dr. Whitby^c owns, that all the copies, versions, and readings he could find, countenance the present reading.

Another question is moved, How can there be 480 years from the deliverance out of Egypt to the fourth year of Solomon's reign, when four generations succeeding one another fill that whole space of time ? For in the first year after Joshua entered Canaan, Salmon married Rahab, saved from the destruction of Jericho ; of her he begat Boaz, who, by Ruth, the Moabites, had Obed, who was the father of Jesse, who was the father of king David. To untie this knot, 'tis to be considered, that Joshua entered Canaan and took Jericho, forty-one years after Israel's coming out of Egypt :

^a De puerorum antiquitate ^b In Opere Hist. & Chronol. p. 47,—52.

^c On the N. Testament, ubi supra.

Egypt: If these, with seventy years of David's life, and four of Solomon's reign, (which in all make 115 years) be deduced from 480, there will remain 365 years to be divided between Rahab, Boaz, Obed and Jesse, or the time in which they could be supposed to beget children. Now, Rahab being capable to entertain strangers in her house, might be seventeen years of age when Jericho was taken, one year more is fit to be allowed for her instruction in the Jewish religion, before she could be married to Salmon, a prince of the tribe of Judah. To him she might have several children; but we suppose she brought forth Boaz in the fifty-sixth year of her age; which is not extraordinary, especially in these ancient times^d. The nativity of Boaz would be in the twenty-second of Othniel's government, 39 years after the Israelites entered Canaan; which 39 years are to be deduced from the former sum of 365; and there remains 326 years to be divided between the nati- vities of Obed, Jesse and David. Thus, if Boaz begat Obed of Ruth, when aged 106, in the eighth year of Deborah's government, Obed, when aged 110, begat Jesse, in the first year of Jephthah; Jesse, when aged 110, begat David, in the 10th year of Saul's reign; then the diffi- culty is removed. If it be objected, that it can- not be thought that men even then should be so vi- gorous as to beget children in the 106th or 110th year of their age, I answer, That this will recur with greater force on those who maintain that the years of the oppression are to be added to the years of the Judges; for they will have 111 years more

^d See page 44.

more to account for, which will make the knot harder to loose. But 'tis not so incredible as pretended, that men at that age should have children, tho' in Moses's time, as appears by Psalm xc. the lives of men for most part were confined within the years of seventy or eighty; many of them who came out of Egypt being cut off about that age for their sins, yet Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb were all vigorous men when above a hundred. Long after that time Jehoiada the high-priest, was 130 years when he died^c: And there may not a few instances be given of men in latter times, who kept their vigour to as great an age as is here alledged, if not beyond it; some of whom I have before named^f, and many more may be named in Pliny^g and others^h. Our countryman, Mr. Baillie, mentionsⁱ one Mr. Collin Rhind, he was acquainted with at Perth, in the year 1650, who at that time was a vigorous man, of an hundred and ten years of age; and could give a valuable account of all that happened any way remarkable in our country from his infancy. The like examples might be given in our own days. But by what is said, it is credible that these men, who were of the number of our Saviour's progenitors according to the flesh, might have children at the age alledged: And therefore these generations in the question might take up such a space of time.

The last question I notice in the sacred chronology of this period, is, How can Jephthah affirm that *Israel dwelt in Hesbbon and her towns three hundred*

^c 2 Chron. xxiv. 15. ^f See Vol. I p. 66. ^g Hist. naturalis, lib 7. cap. 49. ^h Turner's Wonders of Nature, p. 30 Heideggeri hist. Patriarch. p. m. 354. & seqq. vol. 1. ⁱ Chronologia, p. 53.

dred years^k, since from the time Moses overcame Sihon, and possessed Israel of Heshbon^l, there were not so many? Answer, 'Tis very usual both in sacred and profane authors to set down a round number, leaving out a few odd years, whether more or less: Now, from the departure out of Egypt, to the beginning of Jephthah's government (of which only the Ammonites demand, and Jephthah's answer can be understood) we will find exactly 305 years, according to the particulars of this period above-mentioned^m; the five years being omitted, it may very well be said that Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns three hundred years: And this calculation also confirms our opinion, that the years of the oppression are contained within these of the government of the judges; for if all the years of the oppression before Jephthah were to be counted separately from the years of the government, and added to them, the years wherein Israel dwelt in Heshbon would be 376, which far exceeds the number in the textⁿ.

§ 28. I go now to consider some remains of profane history during this period. These are still very obscure, the chronology uncertain; and the facts for most part fabulous and doubtful. As to the affairs of Egypt, I have before noticed^o the series of their kings writ by Eratosthenes, and preserved by Syncellus^p, as the best guide to conduct us into that history, and drawn down that list from the year of the world 1849, which is 193 years after the flood, to the reign of Apaxus Maximus; which begun in the year of the world 2423, and continued

^k Judges xi. 26. ^l Numb. xxi. ^m See p. 149, &c. ⁿ Judges xi. 26.

^o See Vol. I. p. 269. ^p Inter Scriptores Byzantinos. p. 91.

continued a hundred years, till Israel came out of Egypt. To proceed with that catalogue: In the year of the world 2523, reigned in Egypt, Echefius Caras one year. In the year 2524, began Nitocris, and reigned six years; in the year 2530, began Myrtæus, and reigned twenty-two years. In the year 2552, began Thyosimares, and reigned twelve years. He seems to be the same whom Herodetus calls Myris or Myrios⁹, from whom the lake Myris and its pyramids are named; for Herodote says, he died 900 years before the priests told him these things in Egypt; and if we add to 2564 (which we suppose to be the year of Myris's death) 900 years; this will fall in the year 3464, which according to Helvicus's tables, is the 36th year of Darius Hystaspis, in whose time Herodote began to flourish. In the year 2564, began Thyrellus, and reigned eight years. In the year 2572, began Semiphucares, and reigned eighteen years; in the year 2590, began Chuter Taurus, and reigned seven years; in the year 2597, began Cheres Philosophus, and reigned twelve years; in the year 2609, began Choma Ephtha, and reigned eleven years; in the year 2620, began Anchurius Ochus, and reigned sixty years; in the year 2680, began Penteathyris, and reigned sixteen years; in the year 2696, began Stamenes, and reigned twenty-three years; in the year 2719, began Sistosichemes, and reigned fifty-five years; in the year 2774, began Maris, and reigned forty-three years; in the year 2817, began Siphos Hermes,——in the year 2836, began Phruron or Nilus,——in the year 2843, began Amurrhæus, and reigned

⁹ Herodotus, lib. 2. cap. 13. p. m. 94.

reigned sixty-three years, or to the year of the world 2906.

As to the affairs of Greece, they have no chronology to be depended on before the Olympiads, which are computed to have begun in the year from the creation 3174, being the 37th year of the reign of Uzziah king of Judah, according to Helvicus's tables: But since many of the fabulous stories which the Greek and Latin poets enlarge upon, seem to have had some foundation during this period, from the deliverance out of Egypt, to the building of the temple by Solomon, I shall here take some notice of them. In the time of Deucalion king of Thessaly, son of Prometheus, there happened such a deluge in Thessaly, as the poets took occasion to say, all mankind perished, and that Deucalion and Pyrrha his wife, to re-people the world, by the advice of the oracle of Themis, threw stones behind them, that were changed into men and women. This, according to Clemens Alexandrinus's computation, was four generations after the government of Moses, that is, 133 years or thereby, about the year 2589 from the creation, in the thirty-ninth year of Ehud's government over Israel. About the same time happened the burning of Phaethon. He was a prince of the Ligurians, and a great astrologer, who principally applied himself to study the course of the sun. In his time Italy, near the river Po, was so much incommoded with extraordinary heats, that the earth became dry and barren for several years: From which event Ovid drew the

VOL. II.

X

fable

^r Vide Ovidii Metamorph. lib. 1. fab. 7. ^s Clemens Alexand. Stromatum, lib. 2. p. 335, 336 in editione Coloniae 1699.

fable¹ of burning the earth, which he hath beautifully adorned. From the burning of Phaethon, to the burning of Ida, and the Idæi Dactyli, according to Clemens², are 73 years, which leads to the year of the world 2662, being the 32d of Deborah's government in Israel. Ida was a mountain in Crete; and there was also one of the same name more famous in Phrygia near Troy, which the poets imagine did once burn; that there iron was found; and there the Idæi Dactyli, or priests of Cybele, dwelt, who were reckoned the children of Sol and Minerva, or of Saturn and Alciope. Five of them were males, and five of them females; and were³ called Dactyli, because equal in number to the fingers of a man's hand. Hence did also spring the Corybantes, priests of Cybele, mother of the Gods⁴; who being moved with a fury they called divine, celebrated their feasts, by beating drums, dancing and leaping like mad people. From the burning of Ida, to the rape of Ganymede, according to Clemens⁵ are 65 years; which carry us down to the year of the world 2727, the 14th year of Tolah's judging Israel. Ganymede, the son of Tros, king of Phrygia was, as the poets tell⁶, beloved, and carried up into the heavens by Jupiter, in the shape of an eagle, where, against Juno's mind he was made cup-bearer to the Gods. By which, some understand the soul mounting up to heaven on the wings of contemplation; tho' I doubt if these profane heathenish fables admit so good a moral. From the rape of Ganymede, to the time of Perseus, are fifteen years; which will

¹ Ovid. *Metam.* lib. 2. fab. 1. ² Clemens Alex. loco citato ³ Strabo, lib. 10. p. 472. ⁴ Clemens Alex. loc. cit. ⁵ Ovid *Metam.* lib. 10. fab. 4.

will fall in the sixth year of Jair. The poets and fabulous writers, tell many strange stories of this Perseus^a; as, that he was begot by Jupiter on Danae in a golden shower; that when he came to be of age, he overcame the Gorgons with their queen Medusa, whose hair was full of serpents, subdued the inhabitants of mount Atlas, delivered Andromeda, by killing a sea monster set to devour her, and then married her: That afterwards he fought against the king of Mauritania and Æthiopia; that returning to Greece, he overcame his uncle Prætus, and Polydectes, king of the island Seriphus, and all this in a very short time. From the expedition of Perseus to the first taking of Troy, thirty-four years; thence to the sailing of the ship Argo, sixty-four. This calculation will lead us to the year of the world 2840, the thirty-second year of Eli's government over Israel, as the time of the Argonauts.

There are few things more famous by the songs of the poets, than this expedition^b of these valiant Greeks, who accompanied Jason to Colchos for the golden fleece. The number of the adventurers were about fifty-two, of whom Hercules, Hylas, Theseus, Perithous, Orpheus, Peleus, Jason and Telamon were chief. The foundation of the story is conceived to be, that the Argonauts sailed to some part of Scythia, to carry off a share of the riches of that country, where the inhabitants gained a great deal of gold out of the rivers that ran from mount Caucasus, by using sheep skins with the wool on, to take up the powder of this metal;

^a Ovidius in Metamorph. lib. 4. & 5. & alii. ^b See Apollonius Rhodius. Valerii Flacci. Argonautica, in eight books. Ovidii Metamorph. lib. 7. fab. 1. & seqq

metal; and hence it was called the golden-fleece. But the poets in their fruitful fancy, have tacked many fables to the story, as of Jason's love to Hypsipile at Lemnos, of his marriage with the daughter of the king of Colchos, a famous witch named Medea, who taught him to conquer bulls that vomited fire, to kill the dragon that kept the fleece, to sow the serpents teeth, out of which rose an army of men; how she came away with Jason; but fearing her father would bring her back, she killed her young brother Absyrtus, and strowed the way with his dissected members, to retard her parent in the pursuit; that arriving in Thessaly, she restored the age of Æson, Jason's father, making him young again, with other idle falsehoods of that kind,

About this time Sethosis king of Egypt, as Josephus^c calls him, from Manetho, (but these ancient authors give different names to the sovereigns of that country) "Having many troops by land, and ships at sea, left his brother Armais, administrator of his kingdom, with a regal power, only commanding him not to wear the crown, nor to meddle with the Queen-mother, nor with any of the royal concubines. The king himself marched to Cyprus and Phœnicia, where he overcame the Medes and Assyrians, either by his arms, or by making them submit to the terror of his name; and being elevated with his success, overrun the eastern cities and provinces. In the meantime Armais did all things against his brother's orders, sparing neither the queen nor the royal concubines; yea, by ill advice, he assumed the

crown,

^c Contra Appionem, lib. I. p. m. 1041.

crown, and rebelled against his brother. The high-priest of Egypt informed Sethosis of the whole matter, who made haste to Pelusium, and got possession of his own kingdom, which was called by his name; for Sethosis was called Ægyptus. Armais had a brother called Danaus." So far Manetho. Of this Danaus the Greeks tell us^d, That he had fifty daughters, who married their fifty cousin-germans, sons to Ægyptus their father's brother, who by order of their father, murdered their husbands the first night, because he was told by an oracle, that he should be dispossessed of Argos by a son-in-law; but Hypermenestra, one of the daughters, saved her husband Lynceus, who succeeded her father. I know some authors have placed this story far higher; but the reason why I set it here, is because Josephus^e, who owns it to be the ancientest thing among the Argives, says, it happened 393 years after the Israelites departed from Egypt, which will carry it down to the year of the world 2849, the last of Eli's government over Israel.

I shall have occasion in another part of this work to write the origin of the Latins^f, and of the history of Theseus^g, which was not before the time of Samuel and Saul's government; and therefore shall not now stay upon these uncertain or fabulous things; nor upon the story of Hercules, whom the Greeks have made a deity, and his twelve labours, who can be no older, being a companion and contemporary to Theseus.

I shall also afterwards take notice of the Trojan wars,

^d Hygini fabula 168. Appollodori Bibliotheca, lib. 2. fol. m. 268,—9.

^e Loco citato. ^f See chap. 4. History of the Roman affairs. ^g Digres-
sion concerning the affairs of Greece.

wars^b, where I offer reasons why I conceive these were contemporary with king Solomon's reign in Israel. The learned Sir Isaac Newton^c sets them still later, in the year before Christ 904, or 76 years after the death of Solomon, which will be about the 15th year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. But I dip no farther in this debate. The poets have heaped together so many fables, that 'tis difficult to find out what is truth in the story. That which seems to come nearest it, is, That the Argonauts having killed Laomedon the father of Priamus, king of Troy: When Priamus came to be of age, fit to make enquiry after this mischief, he sent Antenor with a fleet into Greece to complain of the wrong had been done by murdering his father: But he receiving no satisfaction to the demand^k, Priamus ordered his son Paris, or Alexander (for he is called by both names) to do an injury to the Greeks one way or other. Whereon Paris ensnared, debauched, and carried away the fair Helena, the wife of Menelaus^l, whom the Greeks required to be restored. Which suit being denied, they resolved to revenge themselves by war: And having chosen Agamemnon, brother of Menelaus, for their captain, they sailed to Phrygia, with about twelve hundred ships, aboard of which was a considerable land army. They arrived at their designed port without opposition, plundered and wasted the country; and after ten years spent in the war, took the city Troy, which they burnt to ashes, putting Priamus and all the Trojans to the sword, and then returned to Greece.

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^b Digression concerning the affairs of Greece. ^c Chronology, p. 24,—
^d 3. ^k Dictys Cretensis & Dares Phrygius. ^l Herodot. in lib. I cap. 3, 4.

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The chief captains on the Grecian side were, Agamemnon, Achilles, Ajax, Diomedes and Ulysses; and on the part of the Trojans, Hector, Menmon, Paris and others. To raise the reputation of these heroes, Homer, and after him the Greek and Latin poets and mythologists, have invented a multitude of fables, too long to be here inserted; yet I shall select a few. They tell concerning Achilles, That he was the son of Peleus and Thetis: That his mother dipt him, when an infant, all over in the river Styx, to make him invulnerable; except the heel, which she held him by. Afterwards he was put to the Centaur Chiron, to be taught phyfic, music, and the art of war; who fed him with lions marrow, to render him courageous. But the mother being informed by an oracle, that he would be slain at the siege of Troy, hid him in womens apparel among the daughters of Lycomedes; where he deflowered Deianira. Yet being discovered by Ulysses, by chusing arms rather than jewels, he was forced to go with the Greeks; his mother having first got him impenetrable armour from Vulcan. Disgusted at Agamemnon, for taking Briseis from him, he withdrew himself from before Troy; till hearing of the death of his friend Patroclus, he returned, and slew Hector, and then dragged his body after his chariot three times round the walls of the city, and sold it to Priamus. At last Paris shot him treacherously with an arrow, in that part of the heel which his mother held in her hand when she dipt him in the river Styx. Of Ajax the son of Telamon, the poets say, That he was the stoutest of all the Greeks; so much admired by Hector, that after they had fought a whole day, Hector presented him with a sword,

and

and he complimented his antagonist with a belt : That the sword was that whereby Ajax afterwards killed himself, and the belt that by which Achilles dragged Hector round Troy. Upon the death of Achilles, when Ajax claimed his arms, as bequeathed to him, but finding the judges had given them to Ulysses, whose eloquence made his claim better^m, Ajax run mad, slew a great many sheep, and a ram conspicuous for its beauty : But recovering his senses a little, he retired to a solitary place ; where he killed himself with Hector's sword ; and his blood was turned into the hyacinth flower. Concerning Ulysses and Diomedes, who were among the Greeks that returned to their own country, strange stories are told, by Homerⁿ, Ovid^o, and others. As to Ulysses, king of Ithaca ; 'tis said he wandered ten years by sea. Uncouth disasters and strange adventures happened him ; at last he came to his own home : Yet being assured by an oracle, that he would be killed by one of his children, he resolved to withdraw : But before he could do it, Telegonus, his son by Circe, arrived at Ithaca ; where, being denied entrance, he killed his father without knowing him. Of Paris the Trojan, son to Priamus and Hecuba, there is a legend of adventures to be had : As, That his mother being with child of him, dreamed that she was brought to bed of a firebrand ; which the soothsayers explained, that her child should occasion the ruin of Troy : Wherefore his father ordered him to be destroyed as soon as born ; but his mother being delighted with his beauty, took care to have him brought up with the shepherds on

^m Ovid. Met. lib. 13. fab. 1. ⁿ Odysses. ^o Met. lib. 14. fab. 5, 6. 10.

on mount Ida. Being grown up, he fell in love with the nymph C  none^p; by whom he had two sons. Having acquired fame by his equal deciding controversies, he was chosen by Juno, Pallas and Venus, to determine which of them was most beautiful, and had best right to the golden apple, with the inscription, *Detur pulchriori*, Let it be given to the fairest. He decided for Venus; who promised him the most beautiful woman in the world. He won the prize at the wrestling games from Hector himself; who therefore would have killed him, but he discovered that he was his brother. How he debauched and carried off the wife of Menelaus, we have before heard. In the Trojan war he fought with Menelaus hand to hand, till being almost overcome, he was carried off by Venus. Afterwards he killed Achilles, by an arrow in the heel; for which he was put to death by Pyrrhus. Of Memnon 'tis told, That he being the son of Aurora and Tithonus, the son of Laomedon, and brother of Priamus, came with an army of people from the east, to help the Trojans; but was killed by Achilles. When his body was burnt in a funeral pile, at his mother Aurora's desire, her son's ashes were turned into birds, named Memnoni  , and her tears into dew^q. But I humbly conceive we have enough of these fables, which are sung by the poets in charming verse, to make vice reign with impunity, and debauch the age.

The origin of kingdoms through the world, and other civil affairs in this period, are also very uncertain, and mixed with many falsehoods and

VOL. II.

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fables;

^p Ovid. Epist.

^q Ovid Met lib. 13. fab. 3.

fables; yet, that I may not omit them altogether, I shall offer a few remarks on this subject. Troy was one of these ancient kingdoms, where six descents are reckoned in the royal family, viz. Dardanus, Erichtonius, Tros, Ilus, Laomedon, Priamus. But the heathen nations, at least on this side of Syria, had no chronology before the Persian empire; and whatever chronological account we have of these ancient times, hath been since framed by reasoning and conjecture^r, computing three generations at a hundred or a hundred and twenty years; which is too long for these turbulent kingdoms, where murders and usurpations did so much abound. Let the calculation then be reduced nearer the course of nature: Let the death of Priamus, and the taking of Troy, be stated about the tenth year of Solomon, and these six kings be allowed to have reigned fifteen years a-piece, that is, ninety years to them all; the first of them, at this rate, counted backwards from the tenth of Solomon, will be about the beginning of Samuel's, or the end of Eli's government over Israel. The knowledge of geography was still later among the heathens: There is nothing of that kind extant among them till after the Persian empire, unless we take the catalogue of ships and forces in the Trojan war that is in Homer's second Iliad for a performance of that nature. To go on with the history:

Tyre was an ancient city, yet it appears^s, that it was *the daughter of Zidon, replenished by the merchants thereof*; and Solomon, in the beginning of his reign, calls the people of Tyre, *Zidonians*^t.

Strabo

^r Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology of the Greeks, p. 45. & passim.

^s Isa. xxiii. 2, 12.

^t 1 Kings v. 8.

Strabo ^u says, that Tyrus and Aradus were colonies of the Phœnicians. Justin ^x owns the same, and adds, "That the Zidonians being overcome by the king of Ashkelon, retired in ships, and built Tyre some years before the destruction of Troy." The time of this event the learned Sir Isaac Newton ^y places about the fifteenth or sixteenth year of David king of Israel and Judah. For David having conquered Edom, bordering upon the Red-sea, about the twelfth year of his reign, made some of the Edomites, chiefly the merchants and seamen, to fly to the Philistines, on the coast of the Mediterranean; where they fortified Azoth, or Ashdod. Being grown strong by the help of the Edomites and shepherds, they invaded and took Zidon; which made the Zidonians flee by sea to Tyre and Aradus, and to other havens in Asia-minor, Greece and Lybia; where they, by their trade, had been before acquainted. They went not to seek Europa, as was pretended, but to enquire for new seats, under Cadmus their leader ^z, who first brought letters into Greece; and by this his age may be known. They sent colonies into Carthage, and thence into Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and Spain; and Strabo ^a says, that the Phœnicians themselves traded for tin and lead to the isles Cassiterides, by which some understand those parts of England where such commodities may be had. Other events concerning the Tyrians may be found in the sequel of this history.

About the same time when Tyre was founded, the Edomites, who fled from David with their young

^u Lib. 16 p. 766. ^x Lib. 18. cap. 3. ^y Chronology of the Greeks, p. 104. ^z Herodotus, lib. 5. cap. 59. Diodorus Siculus, lib. 3. cap. 67. See Propagation of Christianity, chap. 1. ^a Lib. 3. p. 175.

young King Hadad into Egypt, probably carried thither also the use of letters: For letters were then known among the posterity of Abraham, in Arabia Petræa, and upon the borders of the Red-sea; the law being writ there by Moses, in a book, and in tables of stone, long before: And Job^b mentions the writing of words as in use in his days: And there is no instance of letters for writing down sounds, before the days of David^c, in any other nation besides the posterity of Abraham. The Egyptians ascribed this invention to Thoth, the secretary of Osiris, which was a little after the flight of the Edomites from David, or about the time that Cadmus brought them into Europe.

Lydia, in the Lesser Asia, was an ancient kingdom, where the Heraclidæ reigned about the end of this period; but there are only nine kings of Lydia noticed in history, viz. Ardifiſus, Haliates, Melos, Candaules, Gyges, Ardis, Sardiates, Haliates II. and Crœſus. As to Crœſus we know that he was taken prisoner in Sardis, by Cyrus, the founder of the Persian empire, as shall be afterwards observed, in the year of the world 3399, before Christ's birth 551 years. Allow him and each of his eight predecessors fifteen years to reign, the whole will amount to 135 years. Count these back, and the first of them will fall in the year of the world 3264, before Christ 686; which was about the 14th year of Manasseh king of Judah. There is little on record about these kings, except that Candaules, shewing his wife naked to Gyges, was by her contrivance slain; and Gyges married his wife, and succeeded him in the kingdom^d. He

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^b Chap. xix. 23, 24.^c Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology, p. 209.^d Herodotus, lib. 1 cap. 7,—12.

is said to have been a wise prince, and to have had a ring wherewith he made himself invisible; which hath the air of a fable. The life of Cræsus shall be noticed in its proper place.

The true history of Gaul, Spain, Germany, Scythia, Sweden, Britain, and Ireland, are all of a later date than this period. For Scythia beyond the Danube had no letters till Uphilas their bishop formed them, about 600 years after the death of Alexander the Great: Germany had none till it received them from the western empire of the Latins, about 100 years after Scythia: The Huns had none in the days of Procopius, who flourished in the sixth century of the Christian æra: Sweden and Norway received them still later. Things said to be done above one or two hundred years before the use of letters, are of little credit. And as Sir Isaac Newton^e observes, even the origin of agriculture, navigation, music, arts and sciences, metals, smiths, carpenters, towns and buildings, was not much older in Europe than the days of Eli, Samuel, and David: Before those times this part of the world was but thinly peopled, and much overgrown with woods.

Some travellers report strange things of the antiquities of China; but the Chinese^f themselves confess their antiquities are in great part fabulous; that their most ancient books were in hieroglyphics, and their numbers in computation were mistaken, or months put for years. Of what antiquity soever their first writers were, there is little credit to be given to those now remaining, since that general destruction of all their ancient books by

^e Chronology of the Greeks, p. 190. ^f Martinii Hist. Sinica, lib. 1, 2. Præfatio P. Couplet in Confucium,

by the Emperor Xi-Hoam-ti, about 200 years^s before Christ.

P E R I O D V.

From the building of Solomon's temple, to the first year of the Babylonish captivity, containing the space of 408 years.

[I design here and afterwards to carry a view of the affairs of the world (which may be more full than under the former periods) along in explaining the sacred history, and at the same time to obviate most of the questions in chronology.]

KING Solomon began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign, which 'tis like was a sabbatic year, that the people being discharged from their husbandry, might more easily lend a helping-hand to begin this great work; and the time when it was finished, seven years thereafter, being also a sabbatic year, they would have leisure to attend the solemnity of its dedication. The temple was sixty cubits (that is, one hundred and five feet) long, twenty cubits (or thirty-five feet) broad, and thirty cubits (or fifty-two feet) high, twice as large as the tabernacle reared by Moses in the wilderness. It had a *Porch*, running out before the front of the house, twenty cubits in length, and ten in breadth. On the outside were three storeys of rooms, with stairs to go up to them. The timber work was for most part of cedar, furnished by Hiram, king of Tyre, conformable to his contract with Solomon. The walls were of
fine

^s See History of the Propagation of Christianity, chap. 2, 3.

fine square stones, in the inner-side wainscoted with cedar from top to bottom. The sanctuary was separated from the rest of the temple by a cedar partition, adorned with fine carving, and stood twenty cubits from the end of the structure. The inside of it was covered with plates of fine gold. The ark stood in the midst of the oracle, or speaking-place, as the word signifies, in the holy of holies. This ark, with its mercy-seat and cherubims, was the same that Moses made: For God's presence is the same with his people, whether they meet in tent or temple. From thence God spake to Moses, and perhaps also to the high-priest, when he consulted with the breast-plate of judgment. Besides, Solomon made two cherubims of olive-wood, covered with gold, ten cubits high, and their wings five cubits long. They stood upright, stretching out their wings, so as one wing of each cherubim touched the wall, one on each side, and the other two met in the middle of the sanctuary, over the ark. The porch of the temple was adorned with a brass pillar on each side, eighteen cubits high. The one pillar was named Jachin, that is, *He will establish*; and the other Boaz, *In him is strength*: To teach all, not to look for sufficiency of their own, but to depend on God alone for strength and establishment in all religious exercises. When the people forsook God, this temple and these pillars were demolished*: But the gospel-church leans on the power and providence of God, the merits and meditation of Christ; against which the gates of hell can never prevail. In the court Solomon made a large, round brass basin, five cubits

* 2 Kings xxv. 13, 17.

bits high, ten cubits in diameter, standing on twelve oxen of brass, resting on ten bases, each of which had four wheels. This basin was called the *molten sea*, which might contain above five hundred barrels of water. Besides, there were ten lavers of brass, four cubits high, standing on their proper bases, for the use of the priests, to wash themselves, to cleanse the sacrifices, and to keep the courts neat. In the tabernacle there was but one laver of brass to wash in, but in the court of the temple a sea of brass; to intimate, that by the gospel of Christ there is fuller preparation for our cleansing, than by the law of Moses: For the gospel presents us with a *fountain opened*^b, the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. The same things were in the temple as had been in the tabernacle before, only finer and larger: For the altar for sacrifice was twenty cubits long, twenty in height, and ten in breadth; the altar for incense was still one, for Christ and his intercession are so. In the temple there were ten golden tables^c, with a hundred basins of gold belonging to them. In 1 Kings vii. 48. there is mention only of the table of gold; which we may suppose larger than the rest, to which the others were as side-boards. In the tabernacle there was only one large candlestick, but in the temple there were ten candlesticks of gold, five on the right side, and five on the left of the oracle, with their flowers, lamps and tongs, all of the same metal^d; intimating the much greater plenty of spiritual food and heavenly light the gospel blesteth us with, than the law of Moses could afford. The censers, all the vessels and instruments

^b Zech. xiii. 1.^c 2 Chron. iv. 8.^d 1 Kings vii. 49.

struments within were of gold; the very hinges of the doors were of the same, all being splendid and magnificent. The pots, the shovels, the basins, and all the utensils for the sacrifices, were of bright brass. The brasier whom Solomon employed to manage the work, was Hiram or Huram^c, who by the mother's side was an Israelite, of the tribe of Naphtali, but by his father's side a man of Tyre; that the good affection of an Israelite to the house of God, joined to the skill of a Tyrian, might qualify him for that work: As the tabernacle was built with the wealth of Egypt, so the temple with the wit of Tyre. God served himself by these common gifts for good purposes. The place where the brazen vessels were cast, was the plain of Jordan; because there was stiff clay fit for moulds, and Solomon would not have dirty smoky work done in Jerusalem.

What was signified by the Levitical service, and the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, hath been before considered^f; I shall now only observe, That the temple signified Christ the true temple: *He spoke of the temple of his body^g; God prepared it^h; in him dwells the fulness of the Godheadⁱ.* As the Shechinah in the temple, all the spiritual Israel meet in him, and through him have access to God. Secondly, Every believer is a living temple, where the Spirit of God dwells; we are not only wonderfully made by divine Providence, but created of new by divine grace, built upon Christ as the true foundation of our happiness, and will be perfected in due time. Thirdly, The gospel church

VOL. II.

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^c 2 Chron. iv. 17, 18. ^g See Vol. I. p. 348, 349, &c. ^h John ii. 21.
ⁱ Heb. x. 5. ^f See Vol. I. p. 348, 349, &c. ^g John ii. 21.
^h Heb. x. 5. ⁱ Col. ii. 9.

is the mystical temple, *which grows up to a holy temple in the Lord*^k. It is enriched and beautified with the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit; not only Jews but also Gentiles have free access to it, *strangers and foreigners* may be built up an habitation to God^l. Here is the outer-court of the visible church, which men enter into by an open profession of the truth; and the inner-court of the invisible church, to which we are admitted by true faith uniting us to Christ. *He appoints salvation for walls and bulwarks*: He enlightens the house by his word and Spirit. He covers it from storms and tempests, and he carries on the building to perfection. Fourthly, Heaven is the everlasting temple, where the church triumphant will be fixed for ever. The streets of this new Jerusalem, in allusion to the flooring of the temple, are all said to be of pure gold^m. There the cherubims always attend the throne of glory; there is the perfection of beauty and harmony; there are everlasting discoveries of the Redeemer's glory; there the bodies of the saints shall be made like his glorious body. *We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*. There sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and saints shall sing everlasting songs to him who hath redeemed us with his blood, out of every tongue, kindred, people and nation.

Solomon having finished the temple in the eleventh of his reignⁿ, all the elders, the princes of the tribes, and the heads of the families of Israel assembled at Jerusalem, to convey the ark of the

^k Eph. ii. 21.ⁿ 1 Kings vi. 38.^l Eph. ii. 19, 22.^m A. M. 3943. Ant. C. 1807.^m Rev. xxi. 21,

the covenant into this new habitation, about the time of the feast of tabernacles. The assembly was very great, to do honour to God and the king, giving him public thanks for the honour he had done to his nation, and to testify their universal joy and satisfaction in the settlement of the ark, which the priests carried into the sanctuary. There was nothing in it but the two tables of stone, a treasure exceeding all the dedicated things; the pot of manna, with Aaron's rod were by the ark, but not in it. The Lord testified that he was well pleased with this service; for *when the priests were come out of the holy place, the cloud filled the house, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord^o.* By this emanation of glory, the Lord put honour upon the ark, owning it as a token of his presence. The glory of this sacred symbol had been long eclipsed by its frequent removes and mean lodging; but now he will have it looked upon with as much veneration, as when Moses brought it into the tabernacle. He testified his acceptance of the building and furnishing of the temple as service done to his name: He struck an awe upon the assembly, and shewed himself ready to hear their prayers. The priests being astonished at the cloud, Solomon encouraged them; for though it was dark, the legal dispensation being so, when compared with the light of the gospel, and much more when compared with the glory of heaven; yet it was a token of divine favour. He also instructed the people in the reasons he had for building this house, and blessed the
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the Lord: Then he prayed^a. Though he was a great king, he did not appoint one of his priests to perform this piece of devotion, but did it himself before the congregation, as a type of Christ the great intercessor for all over whom he rules. The prayer is plain, and most suitable to the occasion, where he gives glory to God, adoring his divine perfections, intreats for his favour, that God would hear, and graciously answer this and all the prayers that should be made in or toward this house, in every case, whether of national or personal affliction, of strangers or Israelites, in the day of battle, or in the land of their captivity. Prayer being ended, Solomon stood up, blessed the people, and solemnly charged them to preserve their duty to God. The feast of dedication was kept seven days successively, during which, Solomon offered two and twenty thousand oxen, and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. The people blessed the king, and went to their own habitations joyful and glad of heart. These were Israel's golden days.

After this, Solomon spent thirteen years, which leads to the twenty-fourth year of his reign, in building his own house, and the house of the forest of Lebanon^a. His father had enlarged his dominions as far as was promised to Israel; he having peace, plenty, opulent trade, with a disposition to erect stately fabrics, thought fit to employ his cares that way. He took little more than seven years to build the temple; but being not so intent about his own palaces, and no such preparations being made beforehand for them, nor the

^a 1 Kings viii. 22.—53. 2 Chron. vi. 12.—41. 9 1 Kings vii. 1, 2.

* A. M. 2956. Ant. C. 994.

the people under such obligations to assist, these took a longer time. 'Tis not worth debate, if the house of the forest of Lebanon was a country seat near Jerusalem, so^r called from the pleasantness of its situation, and the trees that encompassed it, as some judge, or as others, that it was really a house in the forest of Lebanon, where he certainly had buildings^r; and we read of the tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus^s, which seems to have been a part of this house. All his houses were rich, beautiful and magnificent.

God had given Solomon a real answer to his prayer, at the dedication of the temple, by the fire which came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifices^t; but he gave him a more particular answer, when he appeared to him a second time^u, where the Lord assures him of his special presence in the temple he had built; yet tells him that this house was designed only to protect him and his people in their allegiance to God, but not in their rebellion and disobedience. The ruin of the kingdom would be the certain consequence of his or his childrens apostacy. Solomon having finished his principal buildings, recompensed Hiram king of Tyre for the kind assistance he had given him. He had made him a yearly advance of provisions, conformable to a bargain that hath been before-mentioned^x; and over and above, he gave him twenty small cities in Galilee. Hiram came to see them, but not being pleased, he called them Cabul, a Phenician word, which Josephus says^y, signifies

^r 1 Kings ix. 19. ^s Song vii. 4. ^t 2 Chron. vii 1. ^u 1 Kings ix. 1.
^v 2 Chron vii 12,—22. ^x See p. 148. ^y Antiq. lib. 8. cap. 2.

signifies *displeasing*. Tyre was a clean town, filled with rich trading men, who did not know how to value and improve country houses, only fit for men employed in tilling the ground, and feeding cattle; wherefore Solomon took them back, repaired and caused the children of Israel inhabit them, and no doubt gave Hiram an equivalent in something else. The cities themselves lay in the border of the tribe of Asher^a, and probably had continued in the hands of the natives, till Solomon made himself master of them, and peopled them with Israelites. Josephus^a gives a further account of the good correspondence between Solomon and Hiram, from Menander and Dius, two historians who wrote the Tyrian annals, which are now lost.

Solomon not only raised up the temple of the Lord and palaces for himself, but also built Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, Hazer, Megiddo, Bethoron the nether, Baalah, and Tadmor in the wilderness. Josephus says^b, the Greeks called it Palmyra, and Gezer; which place last named, Pharaoh king of Egypt took from the Canaanites, and gifted it to his daughter, Solomon's wife. He employed the Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, left in the land, about the more slavish part of these structures, making the Israelites of his own nation their overseers. All these buildings required immense taxes, which the wealth and plenty of Israel, and the neighbouring countries tributary to Solomon did afford; and his riches were also increased by an opulent trade. King David began it; for he having conquered Edom, and reduced it

^a Josh. xix. 24, 27.^a Antiq. lib. 8. cap. 2.^b Idem. ibidem.

it to a province of his empire, he thereby became master of two sea-port towns, in the Red Sea, Elath and Ezion-gaber^c, and thence carried on a trade; for the three thousand talents given to the house of God, and called the gold of Ophir^d, seem to be what he had in several voyages to that place. Solomon improved and carried on the traffic to Ophir; and had from thence in one voyage four hundred and fifty talents of gold^e, which may amount to 2,025,000 pounds. In 1 Kings ix. 28. it is called four hundred and twenty talents; thirty being deduced for the expence of the navy: And it must be owned, that he managed the trade to the best advantage by his great wisdom and application; for not being perplexed with such wars as his father, he had more leisure to attend thereto. And for the better settling thereof, he went in person to Elath and Ezion-gaber, where he took care by his own inspection for the building of ships, fortifying these ports, and furnishing them with good seamen, which he might have from the maritime towns of Palestine, and from his ally Hiram king of Tyre. The use of the compass not being known in these times, the way of navigation was only by coasting, which often made that a voyage of three years that may now be done in almost three months. Yet the trade succeeded so far under the conduct of Solomon, as he drew to these two ports, and thence to Jerusalem, the merchandise of Arabia, Africa, Persia and India, as a fountain of these immense riches, whereby he exceeded all his

^c 1 Kings ix. 26. 2 Chron. viii. 17.

^d 1 Chron. xxix. 4.

^e 2 Chron. viii. 18.

his contemporary kings; for he made silver to be at Jerusalem, for its great plenty, as the stones of the street, and brought home gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks^f. From what part of the world he brought these goods, whether from Taprobana, now called the island of Ceylon in the East Indies, or from the southern part of Arabia, which did then furnish the best of gold in plenty, according to Eupolemus^g; seems not necessary to determine.

These acts of Solomon already mentioned, may run to the thirtieth year of his reign^h; about which time, according to Doctor Lightfootⁱ, he may be supposed to have wrote the book of Proverbs, when his children were come of age, capable of instruction. From the first to the end of the ninth chapter, he teaches his son, and all who shall read the book, the nature of true wisdom, and leads them to our blessed Redeemer, the wisdom of God. From the tenth to the end of the twenty-fourth chapter, we have precepts of wisdom, fit to conduct us in the various changes of human life, which shine like a bundle of precious pearls, without the golden chain of connection, in a magnificence above order. From the xxvth chapter to the end of the xxixth chapter, we have a collection of choice sentences copied out of Solomon's writings by the men of Hezekiah, under divine conduct and inspiration. In the thirtieth chapter, we have the words of Agur the son of Jakeh, of the like argument and use. In the last chapter

^f 1 Kings x. 22.—27. 2 Chron. ix. 21.—27. ^g Apud Euseb. de præpar. Evangel. lib. 9. ^h A. M. 1962. Ant. C. 988. ⁱ Chronica temporum, p. 78.

chapter Solomon, who is there called King Lemuel, that is, of, or belonging to God, speaks of the pious instructions which his mother Bathsheba gave him in his youth, and commends her as a pattern to every good and virtuous woman.

About the same time Solomon having conducted his wife, Pharaoh's daughter, into the house which he had built for her¹; perhaps into that of the forest of Lebanon, penned that noble book, the *Song of Songs*, where, in a pleasant strain of choice metaphors, he describes the intercourse and love that is between our blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, and the real members of his church, his espoused bride; as is more fully shewn by commentators on that part of the sacred scriptures, and particularly by our learned and pious countryman Mr. Durham.

The fame of the wisdom and grandeur of Solomon spread so far abroad, that the queen of Sheba came to pay him a visit². The Christians in Abyssinia, or Upper Ethiopia, say³, that this queen was their empress, that her name was Maqueda. But the more common opinion of interpreters, is, That Sheba lay in the southern parts of Arabia the Happy: Hence our Lord calls her the *Queen of the South*^m. Solomon's fleet sailed near the coasts of her country, or perhaps traded there, by whom she might hear the fame of his wisdom; and nothing would please her, but to go and receive instructions from him concerning his religion and civil policy. She came with a great retinue; and this magnificent prince entertained her suitably to her rank, gave her suitable answers to all her questions,

VOL. II.

A 2

tions,

¹ 1 Kings ix. 24. ² 1 Kings x. ³ 2 Chron. ix. ⁴ See History of the Propagation of Christianity, chap. 8. ^m Matth. xii. 42.

tions, received her rich compliments, returned her the like, shewed her all his grandeur, with which she was much delighted, saying, *It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts, and of thy wisdom, and behold the half was not told me*; and returned well pleased to her own country. They who apply themselves to our Lord Jesus, will find him greater, wiser, and more gracious than Solomon, even willing to do above what we are able to ask or think. Solomon had a vast yearly revenue, 666 talents of gold, which amounts to 2,997,000 pounds Sterling, besides his profit by the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country. He did not hoard all this up, but used it; for he made two hundred targets, and three hundred shields all of beaten gold; he raised a stately throne of ivory, overlaid with the best gold; and had all his drinking-vessels and furniture of his table, even in his country-seat at the forest of Lebanon, of pure gold! And he made money circulate in plenty among his subjects.

But, alas! his honour was darkened; for he took so many women, that at last they amounted to seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines^a, a thousand in all, and not a good one among them, as he owns in his penitential sermon^o. No woman of established virtue would desire to be in such a society. Divine wisdom has appointed one woman for one man; and they who think not one enough, may find unbridled lust will be unbounded; though perhaps Solomon took so many, rather for state and magnificence than for use:

^a 1 Kings xl.^o Eccl. vii. 28.

use: Yet to have a whole Seraglio replenished with such foreigners, Moabites, Ammonites, Zidonians, Edomites and Hittites, women wanton in dress, air, and conversation, was intolerable. Even kings were forbidden by the law to multiply horses and wives^p. Solomon's breach of these prohibitions, and particularly of the last, was of sad consequence. His many wives impaired his health, and exhausted his treasure, made him lay heavy taxes upon his people; and which was still worse, turned him cool and indifferent in his own religion. His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God; yea, they disposed him to join with them in idolatry. This drew down the anger of the Lord, so as to threaten, that since the king had revolted from God, part of the kingdom should revolt from his family, though not in his days, yet in the time of his posterity. Hence adversaries were raised up against him, Hadad the Edomite, Rezen the Syrian, and Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite. 'Tis not doubted, that Solomon recovered the favour of God after his fall, and penned his *Ecclesiastes*, or *Cebeleth*, as a public testimony of his repentance and detestation of all these vain and wicked courses to which he had addicted himself; which Lightfoot^q thinks was wrote in the thirty-eight year of his reign. In this book he describes man's true happiness, and the way leading to it, proving that it is not to be found in worldly wisdom, in sensual pleasures, in abundance of riches, nor in a vain profession of religion; but that 'tis only to be had in the fear of God, and obedience to his laws, which alone can

^p Deut. xvii. 16, 17.

^q *Chronica Temporum*, p. m. 76.

can give a man the contented, chearful enjoyment of the present comforts of this life, and assurance of everlasting happiness in the world to come. 'Tis observable, that in the book of Chronicles, there is no mention of Solomon's departure from God in his latter days, nor of his father David's sin in the matter of Uriah; to signify, that we are not to delight in repeating the faults of others: Though they did fall, they were not utterly cast down. Their sin was repented of, and pardoned, and so became as if it had never been. After all, Solomon died in peace, when he had reigned in Jerusalem, over all Israel, forty years*.

§ 2. The glory of the kingdom was in its perfection in the time of Solomon, but it soon declined and began to sink; for we find in 1 Kings xii. that Rehoboam, his son and successor, came to Schechem, where all the people were gathered to proclaim him king, where Jeroboam, who was then newly returned from Egypt, and the people of Israel asked the king to ease them of the heavy yoke his father had laid on them. Rehoboam, instead of answering in a mild, loving manner, as the old men who had been his father's counsellors advised, in great weakness, took the counsel of the younger sort, and threatened not only to squeeze them by taxes, but also to chastise them with cruel laws, and severe executions. Ten of the tribes were so incensed at this answer, that they revolted from him, and stoned to death Adoram, the receiver of his taxes. Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, where he assembled one hundred and eighty thousand men of Judah and Benjamin, with whom he designed

designed to go against the revolters: But the breaking out of the war was prevented by She-maiah the prophet, telling them, *Ye shall not go up against your brethren the children of Israel. The thing is from the Lord:* Whereon every man departed to his own house. The tribes that had revolted from this time and forward, erected themselves into a separate kingdom, and chose Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, to be their first king. He rebuilt Schechem, in mount Ephraim, which had been destroyed by Abimelech 258 years before, and there fixed his abode for some time; and fortified Peniel on the other side of Jordan. Being afraid that the people who had submitted to him, when they went to Jerusalem to worship, would again return to the house of David, he set up two golden calves; the one at Beth-el, close to Judah, and the other as far north as Dan, as symbols of that God who brought the people up out of the land of Egypt. 'Tis like he had learned this sort of idolatry among the Egyptians, where they worshipped their Apis under the similitude of a bull or calf. Wherever he learned it, it was a dreadful sin, a worship of his own invention, not prescribed by the word of God. The priests of Aaron's race would not go into it; and therefore he made priests of the lowest of the people, who were not of the sons of Levi, and offered sacrifices on the altar which he had made on the fifteenth day of the eighth month; the month which he had devised of his own heart: For the feast at Jerusalem was kept a month sooner, conformable to the law. And the thing became a snare unto many in Israel.

A man

A man of God who came from Judah to Beth-el foretold, that the altar which Jeroboam had erected, should be destroyed by one who was yet unborn, Jofiah by name*. The event answered the prediction†: Which being above three hundred years thereafter, plainly shews the inspiration of the prophet by God, whose providence rules, and whose foreknowledge reaches even to the most contingent things; as Jofiah's birth, and his name depending on his parents will, certainly were. As a proof of the truth of the prediction, the prophet added, that the altar should be rent. Accordingly Jeroboam stretching out his hand over the altar, his hand withered, and the altar split asunder. This so alarmed the king, that he intreated the man of God, whom he had before threatened with death, to pray the Lord that his hand might be restored: Which the prophet did, and had his desire granted. Then the king desired the prophet to take some refreshment: But he answered, that God had forbid him either to eat or drink in that place, or to return the same way by which he came. Yet the good man was deceived by an old prophet who dwelt at Beth-el, who had heard what had passed, and very wickedly lied, saying, God had ordered to bring him back to eat bread at his house. After eating, the man of God, in his way to his own home, was killed by a lion, for having disobeyed the command of God. The old prophet, who had deceived him, took up his body, and decently buried it. 'Tis like the good prophet had repented of his disobedience, and obtained the favour of God; but the lying

* 2 Kings xiii.

† 2 Kings xxiii. 16.

lying prophet was reserved to an after-reckoning. And all this did not make Jeroboam cease from his idolatrous practices.

There are some other particulars concerning Rehoboam in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the second book of Chronicles; as, that he fortified his frontiers, and built many principal cities in his kingdom. Having no hopes to reduce the tribes that had revolted, he thought it necessary to secure the cities still in his possession, and to furnish them with good store of arms and provisions. The priests and Levites among the revolted tribes, since they could not comply with the worship Jeroboam had set up, to be out of danger of temptation and persecution, left their suburbs and possessions in the country, and came to Jerusalem, where they might have the free enjoyment of ordinances according to divine institution. Many pious, devout Israelites, such as *set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel*, followed their teachers; and were encouraged in so doing: For, *three years they walked in the ways of David and Solomon*^u. Which some take as an evidence that Solomon's repentance was accepted of God, since his way is commended after he was dead; though his being a penman of the sacred scriptures declares his sincere piety, and his *Ecclesiastes* is also a proof of his being a true penitent. Rehoboam indulged himself too much in pleasures, having eighteen wives, and threescore concubines, by whom he begat twenty-eight sons, and threescore daughters. His wives were not foreigners, but most of them were descended of the family of David, his grandfather. Some of them
he

^u 2 Chron. xi. 16, 17.

he might have married before his father's death; for when that event happened, he was forty-one years of age: By which it appears that he was born in the last year of King David. The religious part of his reign soon expired: For we find, *he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him² and, Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. For they also built them high places, and images, and groves on every high hill, and under every green tree. And there were also Sodomites in the land, and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel³.* Though Rehoboam enjoyed a religious education under Solomon his father all his reign, yet, it seems, the example of his mother Naamah, an Ammonitess, and the defection of his father in the latter part of his life, together with his own corrupt inclinations, led him into these wicked courses. Wherefore God soon sent troubles upon him: For Shishak, king of Egypt, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, came against Judah; and, either by force or surrender, made himself master of Jerusalem, took away the treasures of the temple and exchequer, of the house of the Lord and the king's house, plundered and carried off the vast riches which Solomon and David had laid up, with the golden shields Solomon had made: Instead of which Rehoboam framed brazen shields, which his life-guard carried before him when he went in state. Whether Shishak came up against Judah upon some quarrel concerning his daughter or sister, who had been Solomon's

² 2 Chron. xii. 1.³ 1 Kings xiv. 23,—25.

Solomon's wife, as Dr. Lightfoot^a thinks; or out of a covetous desire after the riches of Jerusalem, the scripture doth not determine: 'Tis more certain that Shishak came, with twelve hundred chariots, threescore thousand horsemen, and people without number, of Egyptians, Lubims, Sukkims, and Ethiopians, against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the Lord^b. Solomon had taught the way to his country to the Egyptians^c, which now they improved to the prejudice thereof. Yet God sent Shemaiah the prophet, to Rehoboam and the princes, to declare that God had sent this foreigner to punish them for their apostacy, and to call them to repentance. Whereupon they humbled themselves, and professed some degree of reformation. Wherefore God in mercy prevented the destruction of Judah; but left them under some marks of his displeasure. It is the opinion of Josephus^d, that this Shishak is the same king of Egypt whom Herodote^e by a mistake calls Sesostris. Of the same mind are many learned men, as Torniel, Scaliger, Carpentarius, Bochart, Stillingfleet, Dr. Patrick and others; and it hath been, not long ago, maintained by our learned countryman, my friend, Mr. Jamieson, against Perizonius^f. Nor can I see any solid reason against it: For Herodote^g himself, owns, "That there were many titles which Sesostris king of Egypt had erected in many countries, which, for most part, were not then extant; yet there were other inscriptions in Palestine in Syria,

VOL II. B b which

^a Chronica Temporum, p. m. 78. ^b 2 Chron. xlii. ^c See p. 178, &c.
^d Antiq. lib. 8. cap. 4 p. 279. ^e Lib. 2 cap. 103, — 106. ^f Spicilegia
cap. 13, 14 p. 305, — 355. See also Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology, p. 68,
69, 192. ^g Lib. 2. cap. 106.

which that author had viewed with his own eyes:" Which is a plain evidence that Sefostris, according to Herodote, had been in Palestine, and may be the same with Shishak, and with Bacchus. Nor are we to expect matters so plain, as to leave no room for any controversy, in so confused a history as that of the ancient Egyptians; of which only scrapes in ancient authors here and there remain. We have little more on record concerning Rehoboam, but that he reigned seventeen years more in Jerusalem, had continual wars with Jeroboam, at last slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David *.

Jeroboam the son of Nebat survived Rehoboam five years. He continued in his contempt of God and religion, and therefore God proceeded in his controversy against him. His son Abijah, who was perhaps the eldest, fell sick; and he sent his wife in disguise to enquire what should become of the child, at Ahijah the prophet, who lived little noticed at Shiloh, blind for age, and yet blessed with the visions of the Almighty. God gave the prophet notice of her approach; which enabled him, so soon as she entered the door, to say, *Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam: why feignest thou thyself to be another?* To her he delivered the message of the Lord with great boldness, upbraiding Jeroboam with ingratitude to God, who had made him king; charging him with impiety, idolatry and apostacy, in setting up other gods and molten images, to provoke the Lord to anger; foretelling the utter ruin of all the males of his house, that the child then sick should immediately die, in mercy to his soul: *He only of Jeroboam shall come*

10

* A. M. 2989. Ant. C. 961.

† 1 Kings xiv. 6.

Period V. *Of the Kings of Israel and Judah.* 191

to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. Adding, that another family should be set up to rule over Israel, (which was fulfilled in Baasha, of the tribe of Issachar) and that judgments should come upon the people of Israel for conforming to the idolatrous worship which Jeroboam had established. After hearing this message, Jeroboam's wife went home with a heavy heart to Tirzah, a beautiful place^b. So soon as she entered the threshold of her house, the child that was sick died; and Israel mourned for him. And Jeroboam himself died soon thereafter: *The Lord struck him*^c; 'tis like with some sore disease: So that he died miserably, when he had reigned twenty-two years.

In the throne of Judah, Abijah succeeded his father Rehoboam. His mother is named Michaiah the daughter of Uriel, 2 Chron. xiii. 2. who was the same with Maachah the daughter of Absalom, 2 Chron. xi. 21. For 'tis usual for the Hebrews to have two names: And she might be a granddaughter of Absalom by his daughter Tamar^d, and a daughter of Uriel as her immediate father. Soon after he had ascended the throne, a bloody war commenced between him and Jeroboam. Abijah had an army of four hundred thousand men, and the other of eight hundred thousand. Before the battle, Abijah, to encourage his own people, and to damp his enemies, made a speech to the armies from mount Zemaraim in the tribe of Ephraim, declaring he had right on his side, since God gave the kingdom to David and to his sons for ever; and he expected he had God on his side, for

^b Song vi. 4.

^c 2 Chron. xiii. 20.

^d 2 Sam. xiv. 27.

for the religion of Jeroboam was false and idolatrous, but he and the men of Judah had the pure worship of the living God, his temple and ordinances among them. Jeroboam took little care to answer, but in the mean time prepared an ambush, to encompass and ensnare his enemy. Whereupon the men of Judah cried to the Lord, gave a great shout, and made a resolute attack, so as to obtain a complete victory. Giving no quarter, they put to the sword five hundred thousand chosen men: For the Lord chastised the idolatry of Israel, and owned the house of David. As a consequent of the victory, Abijah took the cities of Beth-el, Jeshanah and Ephraim, with the villages belonging to them. Jeroboam recovered some of these places afterwards, as appears by the course of the history, though this is not mentioned 2 Chron. xiii. Yet Abijah had no hearty affection for the ordinances of God: Though he pleaded his possession of the temple and priesthood to make out his argument against Jeroboam, yet *his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of David his great-grand-father*¹. He walked in the sins of Rehoboam his father, and had daily wars with Jeroboam, by incursions and reprisals upon one another's borders. He married fourteen wives, by whom he had twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters, and died after a reign of three years; the last of which was not complete, for he began his government with the eighteenth year of Jeroboam, continued the whole nineteenth, and ended within the twentieth year: In which his son Afa's reign begun*.

Afa

¹ 1 Kings xv. 3.

* A. M. 1992. Ant. C. 958.

Aſa was a religious prince, who governed in Jeruſalem forty-one years ^m. The number of the good and bad kings in Judah was pretty equal; but the reign of the good was generally long, and that of the bad ſhort: Which makes the ſtate of the church not altogether ſo degenerate as at firſt it ſeems. *Aſa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father.* Tho' he was neither ſuch a prophet, nor ſuch a Pſalmiſt; yet he was hearty and zealous for God's inſtituted worſhip. He reformed that which was evil, *took away the Sodomites* (or effeminate perſons) *out of the land.* Theſe unclean and filthy birds are more dangerous than peſt-houſes. He removed *the idols, even thoſe that his father had made*; alſo *Maachab his mother* (or grandmother) *from being queen, becauſe ſhe had made an idol in a grove*; or, as Jerom ⁿ and the vulgar verſion ^o hath it, *that ſhe might not be prieſteſs in the ſacrifices of Priapus.* He brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and which himſelf had dedicated, into the houſe of the Lord, ſilver, gold and veſſels; and he built many cities in his kingdom, to encourage and increaſe his people. Nevertheless there were ſome blemiſhes in his reign: For the high places were not removed; and he took gold and the ſilver out of the houſe of God, which he ſent to bribe Benhadad king of Syria, who dwelt at Damafcus, to make him break his league with Baasha king of Iſrael; that by making an inroad into his country, he might divert him from building Ramah. The project ſucceeded; yet the good prince was in the

^m 1 Kings xv. 10. ⁿ Hieronymus in Hoſſeam ix. 10. ^o Verſ vulgata in 1 Kings xv. 12, 13. 2 Chron. xv. 16. See Hiſt. Propag. of Chriſtiani-ty chap. 3.

the wrong, to take treasures out of the temple to tempt a heathen to break his league: He ought rather to have asked counsel of God, and put his trust in him, who had often helped him; and is therefore blamed by the prophet Hanani^p. We have a further account of the state of affairs in his time in 2 Chron. xiv. xv. xvi. During the first ten years of his reign the land enjoyed peace^q. Abijah's victory over Jeroboam, laid a foundation for his successor's tranquillity; which he improved so well, as to carry on a work of reformation, and to put his militia into such order, as to be fit for war when called to it. The first who gave him disturbance, was Zerah the Ethiopian, or Arabian; for so the original word *Cush* is frequently taken in scripture^r: And 'tis more probable, that this mighty host should come from Arabia, in the neighbourhood of Judea, than that they should travel out of the lower Ethiopia, all the way through Egypt, into a part of the world so remote from them. The army was formidable, of ten hundred thousand men, with three hundred chariots, encamped at Mareslah, in the borders of Judah^s. Afa marched against them, making his application to God by prayer, saying, *It is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude: O Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail against thee.* And God gave him a glorious victory: He struck the Ethiopians with terror and consternation; Afa and his soldiers pursued them, took the spoil of their camp, carried away

^p 2 Chron. xvi. 7.—9 ^q 2 Chron. xiv. 1. ^r Numb xii. 1. Hab. iii. 7; See Vol. I. p. 122. ^s Josh xv. 44.

away their cattle, and smote the cities that were in league with them. Upon his return in triumph, Azariah a prophet, the son of Oded, met him with this message: *The Lord is with you, while ye be with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you*¹. To testify his gratitude to God, he summoned a solemn assembly, and offered to the Lord of the spoil they had taken, seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep. And they entered into a covenant, to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart, and with all their soul; that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman. According to this engagement, so cheerfully and solemnly made, they carried on a work of reformation; in which many out of Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon, and several corners of Israel joined².

In the sixteenth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might suffer none to go in or come out to Asa king of Judah³, that is, to hinder any from the tribes under his command to go up to Jerusalem to worship. There is a difficulty to reconcile the date in 2 Chron. xvi. 1. *In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah*, with the history in the book of the Kings; for it is certain that Baasha began to reign in the third year of Asa⁴, and died in the twenty-sixth year of Asa⁵: How then could he invade Judah in the thirty-sixth year of Asa, when he was dead ten years before? I answer, That in 2 Chron. xvi. 1. the years of Asa are

¹ 2 Chron. xv. 2. ² 2 Chron. xv. 9. ³ A. M. 3008. Ant. C. 942.
⁴ 1 Kings xv. 28. ⁵ 1 Kings xvi. 8.

are to be computed from the time when the kingdom of Judah was separated from that of the ten tribes. Thus Rehoboam reigned seventeen, Abijah three, and Aſa ſixteen years before this invasion; which make up thirty-fix from the time of ſeparation: And therefore, in the beginning of this paragraph, this inroad is dated in the ſixteenth year of Aſa. 'Tis uſual in ſcripture to make different computations of the ſame king's reign; as in 2 Sam. xv. 7. Abſalom's rebellion is ſaid to have happened after forty years; which are to be reckoned from David's being anointed by Samuel, and not from his entering into the poſſeſſion of the kingdom, as in other texts. And it is frequent in profane hiſtory. Thus the years of Auguſtus are ſometimes reckoned from the death of Julius Cæſar, at other times from his firſt conſulate, or from the time of the triumvirate, or from the battle of Actium, where he made himſelf ſole emperor. This hath been obſerved by others²; and therefore I wonder why a judicious and pious commentator³ ſhould ſay, he is at a loſs how to reconcile the date of this event with the hiſtory of the kings.

To go on, Aſa obſerving the prejudice that might ariſe to Judah by the building of Ramah, hired Benhadad to go up againſt Baalſha, to oblige him to leave off that undertaking, as hath been before obſerved. Benhadad complied; for he ſent his armies againſt the cities of Iſrael; and they ſmote Ijon, Dan, Abel-main, or Abel-beth-maachah, and all the ſtore cities of Naphtali, which forced Baalſha to give over building Ramah, that he might defend

² Pool on 2 Chron. xvi. 1. Baillie in Chronologia. p. 77. Lightfooti Chronica p. 81, &c. ³ Henry on 2 Chron. xvi. 1.

defend his other territories: And Afa carried off the stones and timber left by his competitor, with which he built Geba and Mizpah. Hanani the seer reproved Afa for trusting in a heathen prince and not in the Lord, whose kind providence he had so often experienced; and the king was so far displeased with the charge as to put the prophet in prison, and to oppress some of the people; which was one of the blemishes of his reign. About two years before his death, he was diseased in his feet, perhaps with a severe gout. Under his illness, he is blamed *that he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.* The help of creatures ought to be used with a due dependence on the Creator. At last he died after a reign of forty-one years, and was buried with great solemnity*.

In the reign of Afa there were several kings and revolutions in the kingdom of the ten tribes. Jeroboam the son Nebat, of whom we have before heard, died in the second year of Afa. Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, a person who imitated his father in all wickedness, began to reign in the second year of Afa, and reigned over Israel two years^b. It appears that these years of Nadab were not complete, a part being oft put for the whole, as in the three days and as many nights our Lord lay in the grave: For Nadab began to reign in the second year of Afa, and his successor in the third^c; or, as Dr. Lightfoot explains it^d, Jeroboam, being smitten with such sickness, as rendered him unfit for government^e, his son ascended

VOL. II.

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* A. M. 3033. Ant. Chr. 987.

^b 1 Kings xv. 25, 26. ^c 1 Kings xv. 25, 28. ^d *Chronica Temporum*, p. 79. ^e 2 Chron. xiii. 20.

the throne during his father's life, and continued two years.

Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against Nadab, and smote him to death as he besieged Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, and reigned in his stead. So little interest had Nadab in the affections of his army, as they not only did not avenge his death, but even chose his murderer for his successor. So soon as Baasha had got the government into his hands, *he smote all the house of Jeroboam, leaving him none that breathed, according to the saying of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite.* To secure himself and his usurped government, he did not banish or imprison, but put to death all the posterity of his predecessor; in which, though God was righteous in punishing the sins of Jeroboam, yet Baasha was barbarous and wicked, which further appeared by his continuing in the sins of Jeroboam, adoring the calves, and forbidding his subjects to go and worship the Lord at Jerusalem. For these things the Lord foretold the ruin of his posterity by the mouth of Jehu the son of Hanani^f, a prophet, and the son of a prophet, who, about forty years after this, reproved Jehoshaphat^g, and wrote the annals of that prince^h. Baasha having reigned over Israel twenty-four years, died. He was active, politic, and daring, likely enough to have established his family: But he was an idolater, which ruined all. Elah his son reigned two years; and his servant Zimri, captain of the half of his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah; drinking himself drunk in the house of

Arza

Arza his steward, and cut off all the males of the house of Baasha, with all who could avenge their quarrel. Thus the sins of this family, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger, with their wickedness and idolatry, were punished, as had been foretold: And the manner of Elah's death, in 2 Kings xvi. 8,——10. may be a warning to drunkards; since they know not but death may surprize them in this condition, and throw them into the pit of perdition.

Zimri, who slew his master, had not much peace¹; for after a reign of seven days, the army encamped at Gibbethon, resenting what he had done, chose Omri for their king; who marched off his men, and soon made himself master of the city Tirzah; whereon Zimri seeing all lost, retired into his palace, burnt it, and himself with it². Thus *for the transgression of a land, many are the princes thereof*³. Omri being come to the government, had wars with Tibni his competitor four years, from the twenty-seventh to the thirty-first of Afa, till Tibni being vanquished and dead, Omri became the sole king in Israel, without a rival^m. He bought Samaria, or Shemeren, from Shamer, the former owner, for two talents of silver, which comes to about seven hundred and fifty pounds. There he built and fixed the royal seat for himself, and the kings of Israel his successors. But *he did worse than all that were before him*. He was more superstitious, profane, and a greater persecutor, by iniquitous laws, of these that went up to worship at Jerusalem, than the kings of the house of Jeroboam or Baasha. Hence we read of the statutes
of

¹ 2 Kings ix. 31. ² 2 Kings xvi. 15,—20. ³ Prov. xxviii. 2.
^m 2 Kings xvi. 20,—23.

of Omri, in Mic. vi. 16. Yet he reigned twelve years, which are to be reckoned, not from the time when he governed without a rival, upon the death of Tibni, but from the death of Zimri, or from the twenty-seventh to the thirty-eighth year of Aſaⁿ, and died in peace; for he ſlept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria. Ahab the ſon of Omri ſucceeded. He was coteremporary with Aſa king of Judah for three, or a part of four years; and was more wicked than his predeceſſors: But of him we ſhall hear more afterwards. During theſe revolutions Iſrael was as a *reed ſhaken in the water*; as had been foretold in 1 Kings xiv. 15. For while Aſa reigned in Judah, Iſrael was in the hands of ſeven or eight ſeveral princes, viz. Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Omri, and Ahab; yet in all theſe changes they did not think fit to return to the houſe of David, and the worſhip at Jeruſalem. Their hearts were hardened in ſin and idolatry: Perhaps alſo they feared the heavy yoke and taxes of the kings of Judah, which made them at firſt ſeparate from Rehoboam, and continue afterwards in the ſame ſtate.

It may be alſo remarked, That in the reign of Aſa we have the firſt mention of a king in Syria^o, *Benbadad, the ſon of Tabrimon, the ſon of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damafcus*, who ſeems to be of the line of the Adads, of whom there are ſeveral deſcents in ſacred record. Athens was then under the government of perpetual Archons, who ruled during life, as Phorbas and Megacles: But the affairs of the Greeks and ancient Latins at that time are very uncertain, and of them we ſhall ſpeak in a proper place.

Jehoſhaphat,

ⁿ 1 Kings xvi 15,—29.

^o 1 Kings xv. 18.

Jehoshaphat, the son of Aza, succeeded his father in the throne of Judah; a good son of a good father. Grace then ran in the royal blood. So soon as he came to the crown, he strengthened himself against Israel^p, not to act offensively, but to maintain his own, by fortifying the cities on his frontiers, placing strong garrisons in them, and in the cities of Ephraim, of which he was master. By these means he became so formidable, that Ahab, a warlike prince, thought fit to court his alliance, and proved more dangerous as a friend, than he could have been as an enemy. But Jehoshaphat's piety was still more valuable: *He walked in the first ways of his father David, sought not unto Baalim, but sought to the Lord God of his father, walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel; took away the high places, and the groves out of Judah; removed the teachers of lies, and sent forth teachers of truth, who had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went through all the cities of Judah, teaching the people, who, 'tis like, were generally ignorant; they knew not that they did evil. But these itinerant priests and Levites rectified their mistakes, and convinced them of the truth, by the law of the Lord. For these things he was in favour with God, who established the kingdom in his hand, and happy in the affections of his people, who brought him presents to support him in the government, which was so much for their good. Yea, he had a great interest among the neighbouring princes: None of them made war against him. The fear of the Lord fell upon them; even the Philistines and Arabians brought*

brought him tribute, silver and flocks. He had considerable stores laid up in the cities of Judah, and his numerous militia, of eleven hundred and sixty thousand men, either of his own subjects or foreigners, in a very good posture, under valiant generals. One of the greatest blemishes in his reign, was, that when he had riches and honour in abundance, he joined in alliance with Ahab king of Israel, an idolater, and a persecutor; and married his son Jehoram to his daughter Athaliah, the worst match that could be. He paid him a kind visit in Samaria, where Ahab gave him a splendid entertainment, and prevailed with him to join in a league against the Syrians, for the recovery of Ramoth-Gilead, a city in the tribe of Gad, on the other side of Jordan^a. Yet Jehoshaphat was not willing to go on that enterprize, without enquiring the mind of the Lord; wherefore Ahab assembled four hundred of his prophets, who encouraged him to proceed, for the Lord would deliver the city into his hands. But the king of Judah desired to ask the question at a prophet of the Lord, which made Ahab bring Micaiah the son of Im-lah. 'Tis like he had him in custody for some of his former admonitions or predictions; and he owned that he hated him, *because he never prophesied good to him, but evil.* Micaiah being come, told that an evil spirit had gone into the mouths of these prophets to tell lies, to entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead. Zedekiah, one of the false prophets, mocked Micaiah, and smote him on the cheek; and the king of Israel ordered him to be put in prison, and there fed with bread and water

^a 1 Kings xxii. 2 Chron xviii.

water of affliction till he returned in peace. But the prophet replied, *If thou return in peace, then hath not the Lord spoken by me. Hearken all ye people.* Where we may observe the danger good Jehoshaphat run himself into by being in so bad company, even Ahab was unhappy, to be cheated into his own ruin, by flattering false prophets, crying, *Peace, peace, when there was no peace.* By divine permission Satan becomes powerful; one lying spirit may make four hundred false prophets utter falsehoods. God in justice can give these up to strong delusions, who would not receive the truth. Notwithstanding divine warnings, the two kings went up to Ramoth-Gilead: The Syrians sent an army against them, with orders to make an attack on the person of the king of Israel. Jehoshaphat went in his robes to the battle; but Ahab, as had been concerted, disguised himself. 'Tis like Ahab, while he pretended friendship and honour, aimed at Jehoshaphat's life, that he might have the sole management of the successor in Judah, who was his son-in-law; if so, he acted a vile part, yet fell into the pit which he digged for his friend: For Jehoshaphat was assaulted; but the enemy perceiving he was not the king of Israel, pressed no further: And a certain man drew a bow at random, whereby he smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness. The battle was continued until the evening; and about sun-setting Ahab died in his chariot. The coach being washed in the pool of Samaria, dogs licked his blood. No art nor arms can save those whom God has appointed to ruin.

Jehoshaphat returned to his house at Jerusalem. Jehu the son of Hanani the seer, went out to meet him,

him^r, and told him, he had done wrong to join in affinity with Ahab, *to help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord; therefore is wrath upon thee, from before the Lord.* God is displeased; thou must repent and be reconciled to him. Yet he commends him for these things that were praise-worthy: *There are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.* The pious king took the admonition very well, staid at home, promoted reformation in his own kingdom, reclaimed those who had gone astray; and in order to keep them at their duty, set judges, civil and ecclesiastical, over them, charging them to deal courageously, to see the laws put in execution, and to be a terror to evil-doers. But he must not enjoy constant tranquillity; the Moabites, the Ammonites, and their auxiliaries made a formidable invasion upon his kingdom^r. Jehoshaphat convened his subjects, and made preparation to oppose his enemies. But his great care was to obtain the favour of God by prayer, humiliation and fasting. God gave him a gracious answer; before the congregation was dismissed, they had assurances that they should be victorious. The Spirit of prophecy came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah a Levite, who told them, that next day they were to go down against their enemies; but *they need not fight, but only stand still and see the salvation of God.* Which comfortable intimation the king and his people received with faith, reverence and thankfulness. Next morning Jehoshaphat, with his army, went to the field of battle, where he

^r 2 Chron. xix.^r 2 Chron. xx.

he exhorted them, *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.* And appointed the singers to praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever. The success answered their expectations; the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, were smitten by thunder or hail, or by the sword of an angel, as Bishop Patrick conceives, and every one helped to destroy another, so as when Judah looked, their enemies were *all dead bodies fallen to the earth; none escaped.* Jehoshaphat and his people had nothing to do but carry off the spoil and jewels, which was so great, as three days were employed in gathering it. On the 4th day they gave solemn praises to God; and the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for God gave him rest round about. He helped Jehoram, king of Israel, against the revolted Moabites¹, of which afterwards. From the division of Israel and Judah, Edom was possessed by the latter, and governed by a deputy², and Jehoshaphat carried on the trade to Ophir, that had been begun by his predecessors, from Elath and Ezion-gaber. One of his fleets being in partnership with Ahaziah, a wicked king in Israel, was broken at a ridge of rocks that lay near Ezion-gaber, in the shape of the back-bone of a man, from which the name of that place is derived; and therefore he next sent out a fleet from Elath; in which he would not allow Ahaziah to have any concern³. He lived sixty, and reigned twenty-five years, slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David⁴. He was a religious and

VOL. II.

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¹ 2 Kings iii. ² 1 Kings xlii. 47. ³ 2 Chron. xx. 36, 37. 1 Kings xlii. 28, 29. ⁴ 1 Kings xlii. 30. * A. M. 3058. Ant. C. 892.

good prince, and a great reformer, yet during his reign the people retained a kindness to the high places^a.

While Jehoshaphat was king in Judah, there were several kings in Israel. Ahab the son of Omri was his contemporary seventeen years^a. This Ahab was more wicked than any king of Israel that had been before him. He not only continued in the worship of the calves which Jeroboam had set up, but took to wife Jezabel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, worshipped Baal^b, reared up a house and an altar for him, and made a grove, to provoke the Lord to anger^c. One of his subjects, Hiel the Bethelite, imitating the presumption of his prince, adventured to build Jericho, in defiance of the curse Joshua had pronounced, above five hundred years before, against any that should attempt it^d. But Hiel prospered very ill: The prediction was fulfilled: His eldest son died when he began, and his youngest son when he finished the work. During this wicked reign, Israel was blessed with an eminent prophet, Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, on the other side Jordan^e. He of all the prophets had the honour of Enoch, to be translated so as not to see death, and of Moses, to attend our Saviour in his transfiguration. Though there be no writing of his on record, except one letter; yet his actions did cast a great lustre on his name. He foretold to Ahab and his court, a sore and grievous famine, which continued three years and a half^f. That fruitful land was turned into barrenness.

^a 2 Chron. xx. 31.—33. ^b 1 Kings xxii. 51. ^c Of Baal and his worship, see Hist. Propag. of Christianity, chap. 2. ^d 1 Kings xvi. 30.—33. ^e Josh. vi. 26. ^f 1 Kings xvii. 1 James v. 17.

renness by the want of rain, for the iniquity of those that dwelt therein. When the prophecy began to be accomplished Elijah withdrew, to live near the brook Cherith; where ravens in kind Providence brought him food, and he drank of the water of the brook. The rivulet being dried up, because there had been no rain for a long time; the Lord sent Elijah to Zarephath, a city of Zidon; where he met with a poor, humble, industrious and charitable widow. He asked of her some water to drink; and as she was going for it, he desired her to bring him a morsel of bread. The woman replied, That she had only a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse, and was gathering some sticks to bake the meal, that she and her son might eat it for their last meal. Elijah said to her, *Fear not, do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it to me; and afterwards make for thee and thy son: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.* The same was fulfilled; and they did eat of it many days, even two years. The Lord, who multiplies the seed sown^g, can make a little, charitably employed, go far; can feed his prophets by miracles, when ordinary means are wanting; and can, according to his promise, *keep them that fear him alive in famine*^h. While the prophet was at this house, the widow's son (perhaps her only son, who had been thus miraculously supported) took sickness and died; which threw her into great sorrow, making her to fear God was contending for

^g 2 Cor. ix. 10. ^h Psal. xxxiii. 18, 19.

for her sin. But the prophet, by earnest prayer, got the child miraculously restored to life, to the glory of God.

Elijah, after he had been some years concealed in a private house, was ordered to shew himself to Ahab the king; for the Lord would send rain upon the earth¹. There was then one good man in Ahab's court, named Obadiah, who feared the Lord greatly; and when Jezabel the queen, that idolatrous persecuting woman, cut off the prophets of the Lord, he took a hundred of them, and hid them by fifty in a cave, where he fed them with bread and water. The prophet met him going to seek grass to maintain his master's horses and mules, and desired him to go tell his master, *Behold, Elijah is here.* Obadiah saluted him with great respect, but craved to be excused from carrying the message: For he did not desire to deliver him up to the king, who had caused search to be made for him every where: And he feared, lest when he had given notice of him, he would vanish, or be covered by Providence; whereupon the king would put him to death for giving a false report. Nevertheless, upon Elijah's assuring him that he would appear that day before Ahab, he went and told it to that prince: Who immediately came to meet the prophet, and upbraided him saying, *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?* Elijah returned the charge: *I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy fathers house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and followed Baalim. Therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal, four hundred* and

and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezabel's table. Accordingly Ahab issued out writs to convene this assembly, either because he feared Elijah, and durst not oppose him; or because he hoped the prophet would bless the land with rain. At the meeting, Elijah reproved the people for mixing the worship of God and that of Baal together. It seems, not only some worshipped God, and others Baal; but even some Israelites worshipped God to please the prophets, and Baal to please Jezabel, and gain favour at court. He proposed the matter fairly to them: "Since there can be but one infinite, supreme, all-sufficient and independent Being, let us try who this is. You that are worshippers of Baal have all advantages; the favour of court, four hundred and fifty priests, four hundred assistants, (perhaps Zidonians): The manager of God's cause is but one poor banished man. Let the priests of Baal have two oxen brought; let them call on their Gods, after they have chosen their ox, dressed it, cut it in pieces; and put no fire under: And I Elijah will do the like with the other ox, and call on the name of Jehovah: and let the God who shall make it appear that he hath heard the prayers, by consuming the sacrifice with fire, be owned as the true, supreme, independent Being." This being agreed to, and done accordingly, the priests of Baal dressed their sacrifice, cried on their god, leaped on his altar, cut themselves with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out; but all to no purpose: The prophet mocked them; yet their idol heard not. Then Elijah called the people, reared an altar on mount Carmel: For the

the law concerning one altar, upon such an extraordinary commission as this prophet had, was dispensed with; in token that when the thing signified by the ceremonial law was come, those shadows would flee away. He cut the bullock in pieces, laid him on the wood, poured twelve barrels of water (likely brought from the sea) into the trenches, and intreated by a short pathetic prayer, about the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, saying, *Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day, that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.* Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. When the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said, *Jehovah he is God, Jehovah he is God.* Whereupon Elijah caused take all the priests of Baal, and carry them down to the brook Kishon; where they were killed. No doubt he had the consent of the king and the princes for their execution. They deserved death by the law*, for committing idolatry, and tempting to it. The prophet had an extraordinary commission for what he did, without which, none may pretend to do the like. It was necessary to bring the people to repent and reform, before the judgments they were under could be removed: Three years and a half of famine could not bring them to such a disposition; and therefore this method was necessary. It may also be remarked, that even Julian, commonly called the Apostate, owns the truth of the miracle

* Dent. xiii. 6,—11. xvii. 2,—7.

at mount Carmel: For, writing against the Christians, he says, *You shun to offer sacrifices at the altar, because fire does not descend from heaven to consume the victims as in Moses's days. But this happened only once in his time, and long after in that of Elias the Tisbbite*¹.

Elijah having so far obtained a reformation, that the people acknowledged Jehovah, the God of Israel, to be the supreme and only God, and consented to the execution of Baal's priests, he went to the top of Carmel, whence he might view the Mediterranean sea; where he prayed for rain, and sent his servant seven times to notice if he saw any appearance; who at the last time reported that he saw a little cloud rising: And in a short time the heaven was black with clouds and winds. Whereupon the prophet desired Ahab to make ready his chariot, and haste home, lest he should be stopt by the rain; and the prophet girt his loins, and ran before the chariot. One would have expected, that after so signal a service as Elijah had done, to the conviction of all Israel, they would have promoted a work of reformation by the advice of the prophet. But it was quite otherwise. Ahab informed his wife Jezabel, an imperious wicked woman, of what had passed, and of the killing of Baal's priests: Whereupon she vowed to put Elijah to death immediately^m. This made him retire to Beersheba, in the south corner of the land of Judah; where he left his servant, but himself proceeded a day's journey, to the vast howling wilderness, where the children of Israel had long wandered after they came from

¹ Cyrillus contra Julianum lib. 10. ^m 1 Kings xix.

Egypt. There he sat down, faint and uneasy, under a juniper-tree, desiring to die. But an angel brought him meet and drink, and bade him arise and eat, that he might be prepared for a long journey. He did so; and went, in the strength of that, forty days and forty nights, unto Herob, the mount where Moses had the law given him. There the Lord manifested his glory to him in a still small voice, saying, *What dost thou here, Elijah? Why so far from home? Might not thou, so great a prophet, so famous for resolution and courage, stand safe in the land of Israel, notwithstanding Jezabel? To this question he replied, I have been very jealous for the Lord of hosts, because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only am left, and they seek to take away my life?* Where he pleads, that his retreat is not to be imputed to want of zeal, but to want of success. His defence being heard, the Lord ordered him to anoint Hazael king of Syria, Jehu king of Israel, and Elisha to be his successor in the prophetic office; signifying that these men would chastise degenerate Israel, plead God's cause, and avenge the quarrel of his covenant: And at the same time God intimated to him, *That he had left him seven thousand in Israel, who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and whose mouths had not kissed him.* For in the worst of times, the Lord hath a remnant of hidden ones, wherever he hath a church, who will retain their integrity against an inundation of error and profaneness. Soon after this, the prophet met with Elisha, and effectually called him from his plough, to attend him in the discharge of the prophetic office; who having made a farewell-feast

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to his family and friends, cheerfully complied with the call, notwithstanding the difficulty of the times.

About this time Benhadad king of Syria made a descent upon Ahab's kingdom, and besieged Samaria with a powerful army, wherein were thirty-two kings, with abundance of horses and chariots. This Benhadad was of the ancient race of the Adads; of whom there are several descents in scripture-record, particularly Hadadezer, the son of Rehob^o, Rezen, the son of Eliadab, an adversary to Solomon^o, Hezion, Tabrimon his son, Benhadad I. his son, who invaded Bascha. These three last-named are to be found, 1 Kings xv. 18: and then Benhadad II. who at this time made war with Ahab: Which is the most authentic account of the first kings of Syria. This Benhadad is called, by Josephus^o, Adad; by the Septuagint^o, Ader; and by Justin^o, Adores. So, different names are given to the same person by several authors and translators. He sent to Ahab an insolent demand, requiring him to become his vassal, and to hold of him his silver, his gold, his wives and his children. Ahab meanly submitted to all this. But Benhadad commanded further, that all those things should be put into his hands immediately; whereupon Ahab and his council resolved to stand to their defence. Then the Syrian proudly swore, *That the dust of Samaria should not suffice for handfuls to all his followers.* That is, his great army would turn all the city into an heap of dust, and be sufficient to carry it all away, though each soldier should take but one handful. Ahab return-

VOL. II.

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^o 1 Kings xx. ^o 2 Sam. viii 3. ^p 1 Kings xi 23. ^q Antiq lib. 8.
cap 8. ab init. ^c In 2 Kings xx. 1. ^o Lib. 36. cap 2.

ed this insolence, saying, *Let not him that girdeth on his barness boast himself as he that putteth it off.* That is, do not sing a triumph before a victory; the events of war are uncertain, one of the best speeches he ever spoke. The treaty being thus broken off, a prophet of the Lord was sent to Ahab, to encourage him to make a resolute sally with the few men which he had; (that is, about seven thousand) with assurance of a glorious victory. He did so, and the event answered the prediction. The Syrian king, who was drinking himself drunk in his pavilion with his tributaries, at first despised the Israelites; yet, seeing many of his men killed, and the whole camp put into disorder, he and his numerous host thought fit to run for it. A prophet of the Lord warned Ahab to prepare for another campaign; and the Syrians stirred up their king to retrieve his loss, saying, *Their gods are gods of the hills, therefore they were stronger than we: but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And take the kings away, and put captains in their rooms.* The first part of their speech was blasphemous against the God of Israel, the Creator and Ruler of the world; though it is like the idolatry of the Israelites gave them too much occasion to talk in this strain. The other part of their advice is taken from a maxim in war, not to entrust the command of an army to lazy, idle princes, pretending to be commanders by birth, but to experienced officers, inured to war, and raised by merit. According to the advice, the Syrian provided a great army, and encamped at Aphek, a city in the triber of Asher*. The Israelites looked

* Josh. ix. 30. Judges i. 31.

looked like two little flocks of kids before them; yet in the day of battle, to punish the blasphemy of the Syrians, they were overthrown, with the loss of one hundred thousand men, and twenty-seven thousand crushed or killed by the fall of the walls of Aphek, to which they had retired for shelter; which fall might be occasioned by an earthquake, or by the ministry of angels, or by some other way to punish their sin, and Benhadad himself fled into a chamber within a chamber. Upon the whole we may remark, that David subdued the Syrians, and made them tributaries; Asa tempted them to invade Israel^u; now they did it of their own accord: Nevertheless, the Lord gave Israel a great deliverance, to magnify his mercy to the seed of Abraham, though now evil and unthankful, either to bring them to repentance, or leave them inexcusable; and to humble the pride, insolence and blasphemy of Benhadad, and his heathenish army. After the victory Benhadad made a humble submission; and Ahab, on too easy terms, only requiring that the Syrians would restore some cities formerly taken from Israel, and allow him to make a few streets in Damascus, concluded a league with him. For which a prophet of the Lord, by a parable closely applied, reproved him, saying, *Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom the Lord appointed to utter destruction, thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.* The Syrian, for his blasphemy, deserved destruction, conformable to the law^x; but since he had been let go, Ahab and his people should meet with the punishment that their sin deserved. Upon hear-
ing

^u 1 Kings xv. 18.

^x Lev. xxiv. 16.

ing of this, the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased; not truly penitent, but enraged at the sentence past against him.

After these things, Ahab let a covetous mind on a vineyard that belonged to one Naboth, near his palace in Jezreel. The owner would not alienate the property of the inheritance of his fathers, knowing, that if it were given to the king, it would never return, not even in the year of jubilee. The king was very uneasy at the refusal; but his idolatrous wife checked him, as if he had been unfit to govern, if he could sit with such affronts from his subjects, and wrote letters in the king's name, sealed with his seal, to the elders of Jezreel, commanding them to proclaim a fast, and procure two false witnesses to swear that Naboth had blasphemed against God and the king, that he might be stoned to death. This being done, Ahab took possession of the vineyard; but immediately Elijah the prophet (of whom we do not read during the former war with the Syrians, because it is like he had been retired instructing the sons of the prophets) came, by God's command, to declare to him, that for this and his other wickedness and idolatries, he should perish and all his race, and Jezabel should be eaten by dogs. Ahab being uneasy at the sight of the prophet, and much more terrified with those threatenings, rent his clothes, put on sackcloth, and humbled himself, making some shew of repentance; wherefore God told the prophet, that the evils which he had denounced should not come in the life of Ahab, but should all fall on his house in the reign of one of his

his sons. How Ahab was afterwards killed at Ramoth-Gilead, we have before seen, when discoursing of the reign of Jehoshaphat.

Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah^a. He reigned not full two years, and did evil in the sight of the Lord; for he walked in the way of his father, and in the ways of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: for he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel. This is a very bad character; though he had heard of the ruin of Jeroboam's family, the fall of his own father foretold by the prophets of the Lord, and the prophets of Baal often proved false deceivers; yet none of those warnings did reclaim him, from following the evil steps of his father, and the counsel of his wicked mother, who was still alive to stir him up to mischief. He was soon rebuked for these courses; Moab rebelled against Israel^b, throwing off their allegiance and subjection, himself fell down through a lattice in his upper-chamber, and the hurt received by the fall threw him into sickness. In this distress he sent messengers to Beelzebub, the god of Ekron, (who seems to be the same with the Pluto of the Greeks and Romans^c, the prince of devils) to know if he would recover. Elijah, the Tishbite met the messengers by direction from God, faithfully reproved the sin of consulting with the devil to know future events; and at the same time revealed Ahaziah's doom, *he shall surely die*. The messengers having repeated this to the king, he

^a 1 Kings xxii. 51. ^b 2 Kings i. 1. ^c History of the Progress of Christianity, chap. 2.

them, What manner of man was he who came to meet you, and told you so? They answered, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins; and he said, *It is Elijah the Tishbite.* Which he might easily conclude, because he had seen him in that dress, and heard his awful messages at his father's court. But so far was the king from making any good improvement of the warning given him, that he sent a captain with fifty soldiers to apprehend the prophet. The officer coming towards him, then on the top of a hill, said, insulting him, *Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.* Elijah answered, *If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.* And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. The same happened to another captain and fifty men, whom Ahaziah sent a second time. Elijah did not this to secure, nor yet to revenge himself; he could have done that another way, but by a miracle, to prove his mission from Heaven, to reveal the wrath of God against the unrighteousness of men: Yet our Lord would not allow his disciples to draw it into a precedent against the Samaritans^c. For the Old-Testament dispensation was of terror; but that of the gospel was of spirit and grace. The third captain humbled himself (though it doth not appear that the king had ordered him to do so) and entreated the prophet, *Let my life now be precious in thy sight.* Whereupon the officer was not offended, but Elijah, at the command of the angel, went to the king and told him, that he would die of that disease. Neither the king, nor any

^c Luke ix 54, — 56,

any about him, durst offer the prophet violence nor affront; and Ahaziah died in a few days childless, leaving the kingdom to his brother Jehoram.

There are several dates of the reign of Jehoram king of Judah: One in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat, when that prince, marching with Ahab to Ramoth-Gilead, appointed him, as his eldest son, his viceroy; and in case of death, his successor. Thus we understand, *Ahaziah died, and Jehoram reigned in his stead, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah*^a. For Ahab, the father of Ahaziah, died in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat^c: And Ahaziah's second year was begun, and not complete in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat^f. In the second year then, from Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, being his father's viceroy, began Jehoram, the son Ahab, to reign at Samaria. But his father resumed the government after he returned in peace from Ramoth-Gilead to Jerusalem. A second date of the beginning of his reign was, in the twenty-first year of his father's reign, four years before his death; probably about that time when Jehoshaphat, going to assist Jehoram, the son of Ahab, against the revolted Moabites^e, thought fit to invest his eldest son in the throne, to prevent dissension and competition among the rest of his brethren. A third date of this Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat's reign, is in the beginning of the twenty-fourth year of his father's reign, while he was yet alive, and was king of Judah also; for it is said, *In the fifth year of Joram the son Ahab king of Israel,*

^a 2 Kings i. 17.

^c 2 Kings iii. 7.

^e 1 Kings xxii. 51.

^f 2 Kings iii. 1.

Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign. By these several beginnings of his government, all these several texts do well agree, and this chronological difficult is removed. Nor is it unusual to assume a son as assessor in the throne during his father's life: Thus did David to Solomon¹; and many other examples may be found.

Meantime it was a great loss to the Kingdom of Judah, that Jehoram did not imitate his father Jehoshaphat in piety; for his father having seven sons, to six of them he gave great gifts in silver, gold, and precious things, with fenced cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was his first-born: And he was so barbarous, as to slay all his six brethren with the sword², pretending, 'tis like, that he could not be safe in the government, till they were out of the way, or because their piety condemned his wickedness; and with them he slew divers of the princes of Israel who had adhered to them, or were like to revenge their quarrel. He also ruined the reformation that his good father and grandfather had carried on; for *he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Abab; for he had the daughter of Abab to wife; and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.* Elijah the prophet being informed of the wicked beginnings of his reign, sent him a writing, warning him, that since he had murdered his brethren, and departed from the ways of God in which he had been educated; therefore the Lord would smite with punishments his people, his children, his wives and his goods, and

¹ 2 Kings viii. 16.² 1 Chron. xxix. 23.³ 2 Chron. xxi.

and himself with a sore sickness and disease in his bowels. By this letter, it appears that Jehoram came to the throne, and shewed what he was, before Elijah's translation to heaven: But the prophet finding he could not go in person to Judah, 'tis like left this letter with Elisha, to be sent by the first occasion, that it might either be a mean to reclaim that prince, or be a witness against him. He slighted the warning, and all the miseries foretold by the prophet came upon him; for the Edomites revolted; and having expelled his deputy, chose them a king of their own, and were not any more subject to Judah; and from that time the Jewish traffic through the Red Sea, begun by David or Solomon, had an interruption till the reign of Uzzah, that is, about eighty-six years. The city Libnah in his own kingdom also revolted. Moreover, the Lord stirred up against him the Arabians, who were near the Ethiopians, and the Philistines; and they broke in upon Judah, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz the youngest. And after all this the Lord smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease; so that after two years his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness, and he died. He that had no bowels of compassion to his brethren, was so plagued in his bowels; and he departed without being desired; yet they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings, after he had lived forty, and reigned eight years¹; but four years being to be deduced for the time in which he governed with his father, only the

VOL II.

F f

other

¹ 2 Chron. xxi. 2 Kings viii. 16, — 24. • A. M. 3062. Ant. C. 882.

other four years of his reign enter into chronology.

In the beginning of the reign of Jehoram, king of Judah, Elijah the prophet, was translated to heaven^m. God had determined this event, and had let him know some time before, that he was not to leave the world by death, but to be carried in body and soul to heaven like Enochⁿ, only undergoing such a change as would be necessary to qualify him to be an inhabitant of the world of spirits. 'Tis not for us to say why God gave this honour as an exception in his sovereign will to the common rule, *What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?* Only we may observe, that God looked on Elijah's past services, which were extraordinary, and designed this recompence as an encouragement to the prophets to witness faithfully against the corruptions of the age, whatever it cost. In this degenerate state of the church, he thought fit to give this sensible proof of another life, to draw the hearts of the faithful up in desires after it: And he looked forward, so as in the translation of this prophet he gave a type and figure of the ascension of the Messias our Saviour, and of opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Before his departure, he visited the schools of the prophets at Beth-el and Jericho, and took his leave of them. They suspected, by the solemnity of his farewell, that he was soon to be removed, and told it to Elisba, who determined not to leave his master so long as he was on earth. In a miraculous way he divided the waters of Jordan, that he might go over it, and be trans-

lated

^m 2 Kings ii.

ⁿ See Vol. I. p. 58, 59.

lated in his native country of Gilead. By the death of Christ, the waters of sickness and death are made a comfortable way to carry us to heaven. Being come to the place of his translation, *there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire; and and Elijah went up by a whirl-wind into heaven,* being conducted in his ascent thither by the ministry of angels. Elisha saw it, as a sign agreed upon, that he should receive a double portion, like that of the first-born, of his spirit, above that of the prophets' sons. And he pathetically lamented, saying, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof:* Where he reckons, that he had lost the guide of his youth, and was thrown upon the world like a fatherless child; and that Israel had lost its best guide, who did more to keep off the judgments of God by his prayers, warnings and counsels, than all the horses and chariots the king of Israel had. In his translation he dropt his mantle; being to be clothed with immortality, he had no more need of it. Elisha took it up, as a badge of his office; and as a manifestation of the divine presence with him, he applied to Elijah's God, and divided the waters of Jordan. The sons of the prophets of Jericho gave him reverence, owning that the spirit of Elijah did rest on him. They proposed to make enquiry after his master; to which he, against his inclination consented: But their search was to no purpose, they found him not. At the desire of the people of Jericho, he miraculously healed their bitter waters, and the barrenness of their ground. From thence he came to Beth-el, where a company of children came out mocking him, and said, *Go up, thou bald-headed, go up, thou bald-headed.*

bald-head; perhaps reflecting on the assumption of Elijah. Thy master is gone up, why dost not thou go up after him? We are got free of him, why not of thee too? 'Tis like their parents, who worshipped the calves at Beth-el had taught them so. *The prophet turned, and cursed them in the name of the Lord; and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tore forty and two children of them.* Nor was the punishment too great for the offence, for these children seem to have grown to some maturity; They mocked not only a venerable prophet, but even God himself, who had in a wonderful manner translated Elijah to heaven. In them the Lord punished the sin of their parents, who were training them up to idolatry, a sin that deserved death; and they might be guilty of many other evils, known to God, who best discerns the demerit of every transgression. The prophet did not inflict the stroke from any carnal or revengeful spirit, but by God's commission, as a caution against profaneness and idolatry, which abounded in that place, and as a specimen of that ruin that would be inflicted upon Israel at last, for misusing God's prophets, and mocking his messengers^o. From Beth-el Elijah went to mount Carmel, and from thence returned to Samaria.

Jehoram the son of Ahab reigned at this time in Samaria; his government continued twelve years, from the eighteenth of Jehoshaphat, to the first of Ahaziah, 2 Kings iii. 1. compared with ix. 24. which texts satisfy me, that the four last years of Jehoshaphat are included in the four first of Jehoram his son, as before observed, otherwise there

guiltborn into some horrible to young men
 would
 Chron. xxvi. 16.

would be more than twelve from the eighteenth of Jehoshaphat to the first of Ahaziah. But to go on with Jehoram the son of Ahab, *He wrought evil in the sight of the Lord, but not like his father and mother; for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made; nevertheless he cleaved to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.* His reformation was only partial: He put away the image of Baal, 'tis like, in compliment to Jehoshaphat, who would not otherwise come into confederacy with him, more than with his brother^o; but he did not break all the images of Baal into pieces, nor destroy that worship among his people; for Jehu found it still prevalent^p; and he adhered to the worship of the calves, that state engine, by which the division between Israel and Judah was supported. The Moabites had revolted from Israel immediately upon the death of Ahab; and we do not find that Ahaziah made any attempt to reduce them, though they paid a considerable tribute of a hundred thousand lambs, and a hundred thousand rams with the wool: But no sooner had this Jehoram got the sceptre into his hand, but he levied an army, and prevailed with Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and the king of Edom, then his deputy, to join in the war. The confederate army was in great straits; for, by seven days journey through the wilderness of Edom, they wanted water; whereon Jehoshaphat made a good motion, to ask counsel of God. Elisha the prophet was then in the camp, and the kings went to him. He dealt very plainly with Jehoram. *What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and of thy mother.—Were*

it not that I regard the presence of *Jehoshaphat* king of *Judah*, I would not look toward thee. And after composing himself to receive instructions from God, he assured them that if they cut ditches along the valley, these should without wind or rain be filled with water in a marvellous way; and God would deliver *Moab* into their hands. The prediction was soon accomplished; for next morning the waters came on a sudden along by the way of *Edom*. The *Mozabites* being on their march, next morning saw the water at a distance appearing by the reflex of the sun, red as blood; whereon they fancied that their enemies had slaughtered one another, and ran to plunder their camp. But the *Israelites*, animated by the assurances *Elisha* had given them of victory, fell upon their adversaries with the utmost fury, routed them, and pursued them into their own country, which they laid waste, destroyed the cities, marred the ground with stones, stopped the wells, and felled the growing timber; only the royal city, *Kirhargseth*, was left standing, yet the walls and houses thereof were broken by stones cast out of engines. This they got by revolting from *Israel*. The king of *Moab* seeing himself reduced to the last extremity, sallied out with seven hundred men, to force the king of *Edom's* quarters: But being repulsed, he took his own eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead, and sacrificed him on the wall; 'tis like to obtain favour of *Chemosh* his deity, or rather a devil that delighted in the destruction of mankind; so barbarous was the heathen idolatry! The *Israelites* seeing this brutish cruelty, were moved with indignation, raised the siege, and returned to their own country.

Though

Though Elisha had been the mean of delivering the confederate army, no man remembered or rewarded his services; but God honoured him to do many miracles. A prophet's widow (both priests and prophets were then allowed to marry) complained that her pious husband being dead, and she left very poor, the creditor came to take her two sons and make slaves of them^a. Elisha having compassion on her, and finding she had nothing in her house, save a pot of oil, he ordered her to go and borrow vessels of her neighbours, to shut herself up with her two sons, and pour of the oil into the vessels, for it would fill them all. Accordingly she poured out the oil, sold part of it to pay the creditor, (for we can reckon nothing comfortably our own, till our just debts be satisfied) and she with her children lived on the rest. At Shunem, a city in the tribe of Issachar^b, in the road between Samaria and Carmel, there lived a woman whose husband had a good estate, and was hospitable; she having a great esteem for this holy man, invited him to dine, and provided a quiet room for him. In gratitude for this favour, the prophet offered to do any kind office for her or her family, in his power: But she wanted no preferment at court, only his servant told him she had no child to leave her estate to; whereon his Master promised, that within a year she should have a son. This being performed, when the child was grown up, and past the perils of infancy, he takes some sudden illness and dies. The pious but sorrowful mother believed the child might be restored to life; and therefore, without divulging her loss, asked leave of her husband to go to the prophet.

^a 2 Kings iv.

^b Josh xix. 17, 18.

prophet. He wondered what was the matter, since it was neither new-moon nor Sabbath, on which she used to frequent his meetings, yet with allowance she went, and laid her case before him. Upon hearing thereof, he sent his servant Gehazi, with orders to lay his staff upon the dead child. But the mother having no confidence that this would be a mean of recovery, would not go without the prophet himself, who chearfully went; and after earnest prayer, obtained from God that the dead child was restored to life, whom he gave to his mother, to the glory of God, and comfort of all concerned. At Gilgal, where the sons of the prophets dwelt, there being a famine, Elisha ordered pottage to be prepared for the young prophets; a servant that was sent to gather herbs, brought in a wild vine, or colloquintida (which, if not qualified, is dangerous) and thred it into the pot. Upon tasting the food, the guests cried there was death in it; but the prophet presently, in a marvellous way, by a little meal, turned the hurtful into wholesome meat, and fed a hundred men with a few loaves.

Naaman, the king of Syria's general, hearing of Elisha's miracles, came to him to be cured of a leprosy, by which he was infected. He came with a retinue suitable to his quality, with gold, silver, and other presents to his physician, and letters of recommendation to the king of Israel. On reading whereof the king was afraid that the Syrian was seeking some occasion of quarrel. But Elisha offered his service: *Let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.* Then Naaman came with his retinue to the prophet's door:

door; who directed him, *Go wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean.* The general at first slighted the mean prescribed, saying, *Are not Abana and Pharpar better than all the waters of Israel?* Yet upon his servant's importunity, he dipped seven times in Jordan; and to his great surprise and joy, found himself completely cured. Being by thus convinced of the power of the God of Israel, he offered silver, gold and raiment to the prophet; who generously refused all: For he looked on the wealth of the world with contempt, and desired the Syrian might have no reason to say he had made Elisha rich. Then the general declared himself a proselyte to the God of Israel; only reserving liberty to bow in the house of Rimmon, in complaisance to the king his master, according to the duty of his place at court. But there ought to be no reserves, in our covenanting with God, to indulge ourselves in known sin; and no countenance should be given to any idol, such as Rimmon; which the Septuagint calls Remman, and the New Testament, Remphan. Naaman being dismissed, Gehazi, the prophet's servant, without his master's knowledge, ran after him, and told him a deliberate lie, basely misrepresenting his master, as if repenting of his generosity, he would act contrary to his oath, and send a servant after the Syrian, to seek a talent of silver and two changes of raiment for some indigent sons of the prophets, after the like had been solemnly refused. Upon Gehazi's return, his master accused him of covetousness in order to make an estate to himself. He denied the fact;

VOL. II.

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but

but was convicted and punished, by the leprosy of Naaman being made to cleave to him and to his seed for ever; which his heinous iniquity deserved. Our Lord* seems to make Naaman's cure typical of the calling and cleansing of the Gentiles.

Elisha did other wonderful and miraculous works: For, going towards Jordan with the sons of the prophets, who seem to have dwelt at Gilgal, and as poor, industrious, honest men, went to cut wood to build to themselves more houses; as one of them was felling a tree, the head of the ax fell into the water. Elisha seeing him concerned for the loss of a borrowed ax, bid him shew the place where it fell; which he having done, the prophet threw in a stick, and the iron, contrary to its nature, swimm'd: For the God of nature is not tied to its laws. The king of Syria being then at war with Israel, resolved to fix his camp, or set an ambush in a certain place; which Elisha, by the spirit of prophecy, forewarned the king of Israel to take care of. The Syrian finding himself disappointed once and again, judged he was betrayed; till one of his officers told him, that Elisha the prophet discovered his most secret counsels. Whereupon the Syrian ordered a party of his army to go to Dothan, where the prophet then was, and apprehend him. The prophet's servant, at sight of the army, was mightily alarmed, knowing of no force to resist them: But the prophet prayed the Lord to open his eyes; and then he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about his master, even an

host

host of angels, to protect him and work wonders. And at Elisha's prayers, the Syrians were all struck with blindness, so as in that bewildered case, they were led to Samaria; where was an army sufficient to cut them in pieces, or make them prisoners. Thus the God of this world blinds the eyes of men to their own ruin; but when God enlightens them, they see themselves in the midst of their enemies. The king of Israel asked what he should do with them; and by the prophet's advice, he gave them meat and drink, treated them kindly, and dismissed them handsomely. So the bands of Syria came no more to the land of Israel to take Elisha prisoner.

But after, Benhadad went up with his army in open war, and besieged Samaria; that if he could not take it by storm, he might starve it into a surrender. The famine became very great in the city, until an *ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver*, (if these pieces be common shekels, at fifteen-pence each in value, the whole will amount to five pounds Sterling; for which six or more living asses might in former times have been bought) and *the fourth part of a cab of doves dung for five pieces of silver*. Some by *doves dung* here understand a small cicer, or pease² in the doves crops. Some take it for the doves excrements, to be used for fattening their grounds within the city, for fire or for meat. But it was an unusual rate to give six shillings and threepence for a Scots gill, or the fourth part of an English quart of such stuff. The famine was extreme; and there are many instances, like it in history³: And this had

² Vide Bochart Hierozolicon, part 2. lib. 1. cap. 7. • Vide Poli Critica in 2 Regum, vi. 25.

had still something worse, that mothers did eat their own children; which was one of the judgments Moses^b had denounced against Israel for apostacy. The king, as he was walking on the wall to give necessary orders, being apprised of these sad effects of the famine, vowed to take off Elisha's head, and sent an officer to see it done. The prophet knew it, and commanded to stop the messenger: *His master is coming, who will prevent the execution.* This might come from the mouth of Elisha by his extraordinary office. And when the king came, not knowing what to say, he said what cannot be vindicated: *This evil is of the Lord: what, should I wait for the Lord any longer?* But his affliction should have made him patient, not outrageous.

Notwithstanding the great straits Samaria was reduced to, Elisha foretold that in a day's time they should have great plenty in the city^c. A certain lord, who was one of the king's favourites, said it was impossible, unless God should rain corn out of the clouds; and for his infidelity, he did see the plenty, but was never allowed to eat of it. That very evening the siege was raised, not by might or by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord striking terror upon the besiegers. At hearing a terrible noise, they concluded the king of Israel had procured assistance from some foreign powers, the Hittites or Egyptians: Wherefore they fled in the twilight, leaving their tents, horses, asses, and their whole camp as it was, and escaped for their life. This was discovered by four lepers; who being like to perish for hunger at the gates of

of Samaria, resolved to make a visit to the camp of the Syrians. Coming thither in the evening-twilight, when the enemies were gone, they found the camp empty of men, and well provided of all riches and necessaries for life. Whereupon they satisfied their appetites, enriched themselves with the plunder, and then told the good news at the gate of the city. Upon notice thereof, the king of Israel sent to discover if the Syrians did not lie in ambush, to take his people when they came out. The party sent made report, that all the way to Jordan was full of garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste; which made the people immediately rush out of the city, and plunder the camp: Whereby such incredible plenty was made in Samaria, that a measure of fine flour (that is, about an English peck and a pottle, or the third part of a bushel) was sold for a shekel, or fifteen-pence, and two measures of barley for a shekel. The incredulous lord, having the charge to keep the peace at the gate, did see the plenty; but never eat thereof, being trode to death in the crowd: And all was fulfilled that Elisha had foretold. These and the like miracles were done, to prove to the Syrians and to all the world, that the God of Israel was the only true God, and to encourage a small persecuted remnant in that land, who adhered to the interests of true religion under many difficulties.

Seven years famine was inflicted on the land of Israel; which Dr. Lightfoot^a reckons to have been from the first to the seventh year of Jehoram king

^a *Chronica Temporum*, p. m. 86, 87.

king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Ahab then reigning in Israel, though for the connexion of the history, the whole is put together, and the several years not distinguished in the sacred text, 2 Kings viii. 1,—6. During the ministry of Elijah, there were three years and a half of famine: Now the time of the calamity is doubled, because the people were still obstinate and incorrigible, under many judgments, and under the powerful ministry of Elisha, who confirmed his doctrine with miracles: And Moses had declared to Israel in the name of the Lord, *If ye walk contrary unto me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins* *. At the beginning of the famine, Elisha minding the kindness of the Shunamite, whose son he had restored to life †, warned her to provide for her family, by removing to some other country, where she might find plenty, And she went to the land of the Philistines; but staid no longer than was necessary: For there she could not enjoy her new-moons and her Sabbaths, as she had done at home among the schools of the prophets ‡. Upon her return, she found herself kept out of the possession of her estate, and applied to the king for redress; who was then talking with Gehazi the leper, concerning the miracles that Elisha had done: And while he was telling how he had restored a dead child, this woman coming in with her petition, Gehazi said, *This is the woman, and this is her son*; which they owned: And this made the king believe the narrative, and to cause restore to her the land that belonged to her, with all the fruits thereof, as a just grant to one

* Lev. xxvi. 21,—24. † 2 Kings iv. 32. ‡ 2 Kings iv. 23.

one favoured of heaven. About this time Elisha came to the territory of Damascus. Benhadad the king being sick, and having notice that the prophet was there, sent Hazael his prime minister to wait on him, with a present of forty camels burden of every good thing of Damascus, and to enquire of him, as of an oracle, saying, *Thy son Benhadad, king of Syria, hath sent me to thee, to ask, Shall I recover of this disease?* The prophet replied, *Say to him, Thou mayst certainly recover, (thy disease is not mortal :) but the Lord hath shewed me he shall surely die :* For he had it discovered to him that Benhadad would die a violent death ; and he had a further revelation, which made the prophet weep. Hazael asked the reason of his tears : And he replied, *Because I know the evils thou wilt do to the children of Israel. Their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.* Hazael took this prediction very ill : *What, is thy servant a dog, (so vile a creature) to do so wicked a thing?* But Elisha told him, *The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.* Then he would have it in his power, and then he would find in his heart to do it. Hazael returning to his master, made a partial and unfaithful representation of the prophet's answer, saying, he had told that he would certainly recover : But he soon barbarously murdered him, by stifling his breath with a thick cloth dipt in water, spread upon his face, and usurped the throne. This change was before revealed to Elijah^h, and was now accomplished.

In

*In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, did Abuziab the son of Jehoram begin to reign in Judah^a. He was twenty-two years old, and reigned one year in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel. And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord: for he was son-in-law of the house of Ahab^b. He sucked in wickedness with his mother's milk, following the footsteps of her idolatrous, bloody house: And this was his ruin; for going to visit Joram king of Israel, after he was wounded at Ramah, while Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, he killed Ahaziah among the rest who belonged to that family; yet they decently buried him, because he was the son or grandson of good Jehoshaphat, who sought the Lord with all his heart^c: He is called Jehoahaz^d, but more frequently Ahaziah, which is the same name, and of the same signification, only the words of which it is composed, are transposed. But there is a difficulty of greater weight concerning the years of his life. How can Ahaziah be forty and two years old when he began to reign, as is said, 2 Chron. xxii. 2. when yet he is affirmed to have been only at that time twenty-two years old, 2 Kings viii. 26. and besides, Joram his father died in the fortieth year of his age^e: How then could he be forty-two years old when he began to reign? Answer, The words in the Hebrew, *a son of forty-two years^f*, do not always signify the age of the person; but may point out, either first the age of Athaliah this king's mother; who being so infamous for mischief in Judah, it is not strange if her age be*

^a A. M. 3063. Ant. Chr. 887.

^b 2 Kings viii. 25.—29. ^c 2 Chron. xxii. 9. ^d 2 Chron. xxi. 17.

^e 2 Chron. xxi. 9, 29. ^f 2 Chron. xxii. 2.

be here described; especially since she for a season swayed the sceptre. But, secondly, I rather incline, with judicious and learned authors^a on this question, to conceive, that a son of forty-two years signifies the time and continuance of the royal race of Omri; from which Ahaziah, by his mother, was descended. Omri reigned six years^b; Ahab his son reigned twenty-two years^c; Ahaziah his son two years^d; and Joram his brother twelve years^e: All which being put together, make up exactly these forty-two years of this kingdom. Such a computation hath been before^f observed; nor is there any necessity to have recourse to an error of the transcribers, nor to a various reading.

To return to the history of the kings of Israel. Elisha appointed one of the sons of the prophets to go to Ramoth-Gilead, and call for Jehu, the son of Nimshi, (who was there as commander in chief, fighting for King Jehoram his master) and privately to anoint him king over Israel, to smite the house of Ahab, and to avenge the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hands of Jezabel^g. Hazael in Syria, and Jehu in Israel, were before appointed for this service. Elijah was ordered to do it^h: But upon Ahab's humiliation, a reprieve was granted, and Elisha was left to see the orders executed. We have before heard of Hazael's elevation to the throne; and now we may observe this young prophet delivered his commission to Jehu, with the assurance that became a messenger of God. Though the officers who were with Je-

VOL. II. H h

^a Lightfoot, Pool, Bailie, Junius, Nisbet.

^b 1 Kings xvi. 29.

^c See p. 195, 196.

^d 1 Kings xxii. 37.

^e 2 Kings ix.

^f 1 Kings xvi. 23.

^g 2 Kings iii. 1.

^h 1 Kings xix. 15, 16.

hu had a mean opinion of the prophet, looking on him as a madman; yet, when they heard that he had anointed him king over Israel, they proclaimed him with sound of trumpet, and immediately marched towards Jezreel, where Joram was not quite recovered of his wounds, and Ahaziah king of Judah was come to visit him. These two kings went out to meet Jehu, and found him in Naboth's field. Joram perceiving by Jehu's answer, *What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezabel, and her witchcrafts are so many?* that he came in a hostile manner to avenge the idolatry and wickedness of his mother, who governed all, turned his chariot and fled. At the same time Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Joram with the arrow in at the shoulders through the heart, so as he sunk down in his chariot; and his body was cast out in Naboth's field, the place that his father had unjustly seized, that the Lord might be known by the judgments which he executeth. Ahaziah the king of Judah seeing this fled, but Jehu's men smote him at the going up to Gur, in the territory of Samaria; and the circumstances of his death are more particularly narrated, 2 Chron. xxii. 9. Jehu went on to Jezreel; where Jezabel, who caused all this mischief, painted, and looked out at a window, telling him, that he would have no more peace than Zimri, who slew his master. The case was not parallel; for Jehu had a commission for what he did, which Zimri could not pretend to. Jehu, without staying to answer, ordered Jezabel to be thrown out at a window; which her own eunuchs did. The walls were embrued with her blood, the horses trode

trode upon her, and the dogs devoured her body, according to the prediction of Elijah^a.

Jehu, being in quiet possession of Jezreel, sent a challenge to the friends of the house of Ahab, to set any of that family upon the throne^b. By this method he made them submit; for they reasoned thus: *Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand? We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us.* This he improved, so as to make them executioners of seventy of Ahab's sons, to whom they were guardians. The heads of these being presented to him, he cunningly upbraided the rulers and elders of Samaria; *Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these?* Yet owned that all this was done, in performance of the threatenings of Elijah against the house of Ahab, and proceeded to destroy all that belonged to that family. The brethren (or brothers sons of Ahaziah, as they are called, 2 Chron. xxii. 8. his own brethren being killed^c by the Arabians) coming to make their compliments to the princes of the house of Ahab, to which they were joined in affinity and in wickedness; Jehu met them at the pit of the shearing-house, and slew them all, being forty-two in number. When he departed thence, he met with Jonadab, the son of Rechab, a good man, and mortified to the world; as appears by the charge he gave to his posterity, which they religiously observed three hundred years after this^d. He invited him up to his chariot, and boasted of his zeal for the Lord: Then giving out that he had a great sacrifice to offer to Baal (meaning the death of the priests

^a 1 Kings xxi. 23. ^b 2 Kings x. ^c 2 Chron. xxi. 16, 17, and xxii. 1.
^d Jer. xxxv.

priests who served this idol, though he did not say so), he gathered all the ministers of this deity to offer sacrifice in his temple, a large house built by the royal family, that would contain them all; for the worshippers of this idol were vastly diminished by the ministry of Elijah, Elisha, and other prophets, and by Joram's neglect of that kind of idolatry. When they were convened and clothed in their robes, he caused his guard to go in and kill them all, destroyed Baal's temple, and burnt his images. God approved this extirpation of Baal's service, and promised that Jehu's children, of the fourth generation, should sit on the throne of Israel. Yet Jehu was partial in his reformation; he departed not from the political worship of Jeroboam's calves, *and took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel, with all his heart.* The people were careless, as well as the prince, and therefore Hazael, king of Syria, was permitted to ravage a great part of the kingdom of Israel, as had been foretold by Elisha*. The time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria, was twenty-eight years, extending to the twenty-third year of Joash king of Judah, and Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead.

We must now enquire into the affairs of the kingdom of Judah: King Ahaziah being killed by Jehu, as hath been already observed, his mother, Athaliah, a daughter of the house of Ahab, out of a wicked spirit of ambition and revenge, that she might reign alone, cut off all the seed-royal, whereby she almost extinguished the lamp that was promised to David. But Jehoshеba, the daughter of
King

* 2 Kings viii. 11,—13.

King Joram, sister to Ahaziah, wife to Jehoiada the priest, stole away Joash, her brother's son, of a year old, and hid him in a chamber of the temple, with his nurse, six years; whereby she, with a pious care, preserved the lamp of David from being put out*. Athaliah having tyrannized six years, in the seventh year†, Jehoiada the high-priest, a pious and zealous man, entered into a solemn concert, confirmed by an oath among the rulers and officers of the army, to set this young king, whom he shewed to them, upon the throne‡. To this end he divided his men into three bodies; one to guard the place where the king was, and the other two to take care of the gates of the temple, that none might come in, save the priests and Levites that ministered, upon pain of death; and armed his men with King David's shields and spears that were in the temple of the Lord. He set the crown upon the young king's head, *gave him the testimony*, in token of his obligation to govern by law, to make the word of God his rule, which he must read all the days of his life; and anointed him, in token of his receiving the Spirit, to qualify him for his office: And the people, in sign of accepting their prince, clapped their hands with joy, and cried, *Long live the king!* Athaliah, coming into the temple, cried, *Treason!* But Jehoiada ordered her to be carried out, and killed; which she deserved as an idolater, an usurper, and a disturber of the public peace. The pious high-priest, to carry on a work of reformation, entered into a covenant between the Lord, the king, and the people, obliging them to become the Lord's

* A. M. 3070 Ant. Chr. 88.

† 2 Kings xi. 1,—21. 2 Chron. xxii. 10,—12. ‡ 2 Chron. xxii.

Lord's people, to serve him, and renounce idolatry. The multitude entered into Baal's temple, overthrew the images of that idol, slew Mattan the priest before his altar, brought the king into the royal palace, and set him on the throne of the kings.

Jehoash, or Joash, being thus invested, reigned forty years **, and did that which was right, though not with a sincere mind, as long as Jehoiada instructed him; but the high places were not taken away, the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in them. The temple being out of order, and many breaches in it, he ordered the money of the dedicated things, and the half-shekel a-head to be made use of for its reparation: Which not being effectual for the end, the free-will-offerings were put into a public chest; and the money being afterwards counted, was given to those who did the work and had the oversight thereof. Jehoiada the priest at last died, being one hundred and thirty years old: and they buried him among the kings, because he had done good to God and to his house. This good counsellor being gone, the princes seduced the king unto apostacy: They left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served groves and idols. Their sin was aggravated because the Lord sent prophets to reprove it. Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada, told them faithfully, *Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper?* But they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king, in the courts of the house of the Lord. This was barbarous, to murder the son of good Jehoiada
for

* A. M. 3110. Ant. Chr. 840.

2 Kings xii. 2 Chron. xxiv.

for doing his office. But the judgment of God soon pursued this wickedness: For Hazael king of Syria, having chastised Israel, as hath been observed, went up against Judah, took Gath, a city that once belonged to the Philistines, but was taken by David¹, and now pertained to the kingdom of Judah: From thence he intended to march against Jerusalem. Joash having neither spirit nor strength to go against this adversary, when God was departed for his sin, he gave his enemy all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, and himself had dedicated, with all the gold that was found in the house of the Lord, to leave off his enterprize against Jerusalem. At another time a small army of the Syrians made themselves masters of Jerusalem, destroyed the princes, plundered the city, and sent the spoil thereof to Damascus. And God smote Joash with diseases of body or mind, or both; and his own servants conspired against him, and killed him in his bed.

In the twenty-third year of Joash king of Judah, Jehu, king over the ten tribes, died, and Jehoahaz his son reigned seventeen years². He departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat; and therefore Israel was sore oppressed all his reign, by Hazael king of Syria, and Benhadad his son, the third king of Syria of that name. So low was Israel brought by their depredations and wars, that all the forces Jehoahaz could bring to the field were, fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot: Yet in answer to this king's prayers, the Lord gave Israel a saviour; for Joash, his son, had remarkable success against the Syrians.

In

¹ 1 Chron. xviii. 1.

² 2 Kings xiii.

In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years, 2 Kings xiii. 10. By which account, compared with the first verse of the same chapter, it appears that Jehoahaz had, two or three years before his death, made his son Jehoash king, being himself still in a state of war, and in danger of death. For if this be not allowed, there are not sixteen years between the twenty-third and thirty-seventh year of the reign of Joash; but if this be granted, as is reasonable, the difficulty is removed. This Jehoash did evil in the sight of the Lord; for he kept up the idolatry of the house of Jeroboam. Yet he was not so wicked as the kings of the house of Ahab; for he visited the prophet Elisha while he was lying sick, lamented the loss that Israel would have by his death, and received his blessing and dying counsel to fight against the Syrians, with a promise and sign of success, that he would defeat them three times. Elisha being dead, they buried him; and his body communicated life to another dead person, as a confirmation of his miracles and prophecies. He had been a burning and shining light, for about sixty years, from the time he was first called to his office: Yet we hear little of him from the anointing of Jehu to his dying day; which was forty-five years, or thereby. All the years of a prophet are not alike famous. His last predictions were soon accomplished: *For the Lord had compassion on Israel; and Jehoash took again, out of the hand of Benbadad the son of Hamael king of Syria, the cities which he had taken* out

Period V. *Of the Kings of Israel and Judah.* 245

out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father, by war: three times did Joash defeat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

In the second year of Joash king of Israel, reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah^m. He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalemⁿ, *doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord*, but not with a perfect heart. He began well, to keep up the temple-service, and countenance religion in his kingdom. But the high places were not taken away. He was not uniform, and did not persevere in doing good. He very justly put to death Zabad and Jehozabad, who had murdered his father; but not their children, according to the law, Deut. xxiv. 16. Upon a muster of his own forces, he found them three hundred thousand men; but thinking them not sufficient for an expedition he intended against the Edomites, he hired a hundred thousand men out of Israel, for a hundred talents of silver. If a silver talent be reckoned, as commonly, at a hundred and twenty-five pound-weight, and each pound-weight at four pounds in value, the whole will amount to fifty thousand pounds Sterling; which will be but ten shillings to each man, officers included; and that is no extraordinary wages. Others^a lay it at less. A prophet warned him not to take the assistance of these Israelites. God was not with them, because they were idolaters. Whereupon Amaziah forfeited his money, and dismissed them: Which they taking as a mighty affront, plundered several cities that belonged to

Vol. II.

I i

Judah

^m A. M. 3139. Ant. Chr. 811.

ⁿ 2 Kings xiv. 2 Chron. xxv. ^a Vide Poll Critica in 1 Chron. xxv. 6.

Judah in their return. 'Tis like God permitted this to punish the inhabitants for joining with Israel in idolatry. He did not prosper the worse that at the command of God he sent away the mercenary Israelites; for with his own subjects he overcame the Edomites, ten thousand being killed in the battle, and ten thousand taken prisoners, whom he barbarously broke in pieces, by throwing them over some craggy precipices. But he made a bad improvement of his victory, when he served the gods of Edom, who could not protect their own worshippers. For which he was reproved by a prophet; whom he mocked at, as impertinent: Yet the wrath of the Lord soon appeared against him; for he having, without provocation, challenged Joash king of Israel to battle, Joash, after rebuking him for the challenge, routed his army at Beth-shehem. Josephus^o says, That Amaziah's men were struck with terror, so as they could not strike a stroke. Himself was taken prisoner, and the conqueror marched to Jerusalem, where he broke down four hundred cubits of the city-wall, and took all the gold and silver, with the vessels found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria. Amaziah survived his conqueror fifteen years, and was slain at Lachish by his own subjects, who killed him for his male-administration after his apostacy from God, yet buried him among his ancestors.

In the fifteenth year of Amaziah, the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam, the second of that name, the son of Joash king of Israel, began to reign

^o Antiq. lib. 9. cap. 10. p. 319.

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reign in Samaria, and reigned forty-one years^p. His character is much the same with most of the kings who governed the ten tribes; *He departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat*: But his reign was longer than any one of them. And he had considerable prosperity; for, *he restored the coast of Israel, from the entering of Hamath, (which was the north border) unto the sea of the plain (that is, to the dead sea, or south border) according to the word of the Lord which he spake by his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, who was of Gath-hepher; which city lay in the tribe of Zebulon^q, in the district of Galilee^r*: And therefore the Jews were mistaken when they said, *Out of Galilee there ariseth no prophet*^s. We read more concerning Jonah in that little book which bears his name, which, 'tis like, he wrote when newly initiated into the prophetic office. God having forgiven him his follies, he was here made a messenger of mercy to Israel. The reason why God shewed Jeroboam such favour, was, because he *saw the affliction of Israel was very bitter: there was none to help them*; and the decree for their utter destruction was not yet gone forth.

In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, began Azariah, (who is also called Uzziah, in 2 Chron. xxvi. both names signifying *God's strength or help*) the son of Amaziah king of Judah, to reign^t. There is a difficulty to reconcile this with the account we have in the foregoing chapter; for if Jeroboam the son of Joash began to reign in the fifteenth year of Amaziah king of Judah, as is said in 2 Kings xiv. 23. then Azariah,

^p 2 Kings xiv. 23. ^q Josh. xix. 13. ^r Vide Reland. De urbibus & vicis Palestinæ, p. 317. ^s John vii. 52. ^t 2 Kings xv. 1.

ah, or Uzziah, the son of Amaziah, immediately succeeded his father, who reigned twenty-nine years, could not begin to reign in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam, but in the fourteenth. But this may be removed, if we allow that Jeroboam the Second reigned with his father full twelve years, and afterwards reigned alone; and so there was a twofold beginning of his kingdom, by his reigning with his father, the first of Uzziah was the twenty-seventh of Jeroboam, and by his reign alone the fifteenth. And we find many instances of the son's reigning with the father*, especially when the father was called abroad by wars, from minding the affairs of the state, as was the case with Joash the father of this Jeroboam. This way of answering the doubt, is, in my humble opinion, better, than by allowing an inter-reign of twelve years, between Amaziah and his son, who succeeded, which would very much disturb and change the chronology of this period, without scripture warrant or necessity.

Uzziah being sixteen years old when he began his government*, he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem, and *did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, as his father Amaziah had done*; only he had not zeal and courage enough to take away the high places. He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and so long as he continued in the exercises of piety, God made him to prosper; for he had success in wars, triumphing over the Philistines and Ammonites, these old enemies of the people of God. *He built Eloth, and restored it*

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* See page 219, 240.

* A. M. 3491. Ant. Chr. 759.

to *Judah*; from whence Dr Prideaux infers *, That he planted this city with his own people, and from thence renewed the old traffic into the Red Sea, which was carried on till the reign of Ahaz. He erected towers in Jerusalem, and fortified them, and raised fine houses in the country. He got much by cattle and corn, had a considerable standing arm, and a numerous militia. Nevertheless he sinned, when out of the pride of his heart he intruded into the priests office, attempting to burn incense at the golden altar within the temple. The priests dissuaded him from it, as unlawful; for the kingly and priestly office were separated by the law of Moses, not to be united again but in the person of the Messiah; and while he persevered in his purpose, he was smitten with an incurable leprosy, breaking out in his forehead; wherefore they thrust him out of the temple; yea, he hastened to go out, and continued to dwell in a separate house as a leper, to the day of his death †.

* There are several memorable events to be found in other parts of sacred scripture, during the reign of Uzziah, which deserve our attention. God had given to Israel and Judah many prophets to support his remnant, to reclaim them from apostacy, and to stir them up to repentance and reformation: But they did strive against both priest and prophet, and murdered Zachariah the son of Jehoiada ‡, stoning him to death in the courts of the house of the Lord, or between the porch and the altar of burnt-offerings §. Though his father be called Jehoiada in the former text, and Barachias

* Connection p. 8.

† Matth. xxiii. 35.

‡ 2 Chron. xxvi.

§ 2 Chron. xxiv. 21.

chias in the latter, yet these are of the same import; and it was usual among the Jews for the same person to have two names. This was a sin of so crying a nature, as it was foretold, *the Lord would look on it and require it*. Some authors count it ^b the source of the rejection of the Jews, and others say ^c, that the captivity scarce atoned for it. Christ let them know it still remained on their score. These means not being effectual to bring them to a thorough reformation, God visited them with his judgments. A terrible earthquake was sent in the days of Uzziah king of Judah ^d. Amos prophesied of it two years before it came ^e. After it there came a plague of locusts to eat up the fruits of the earth ^f, which made the land to mourn ^g. This judgment being removed by humiliation, fasting and prayer, God contended with them by a burning heat and fire ^h. And if these judgments should not humble and reform them, God declared, *The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste* ⁱ.

The Lord also in those times and afterwards, raised up a succession of prophets in Israel and Judah, to give them instructions, threatenings and exhortations; not only warning them by their words, but also committing their admonitions to writing, that all after ages might see the abominable ingratitude of that people towards their God, and learn to do no more so wickedly. Of these prophets whose books are transmitted to us, Hosea is the first in order of time: For it is said,

^b Lightfoot, *Chronica temporum* p. m. 97. ^c Henry on Matth. xxiii. 35. ^d Zech. xiv. v. ^e Amos i. 1. and Joel ii. 1, 2. ^f Joel i. and ii. ^g Hos. iv. 3. ^h Amos vii. 4. Joel i. 19, 20. ⁱ Amos vii. 9.

said, *The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea.* He prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel^a; consequently he continued a prophet at least seventy years. He foretold the destruction of the ten tribes when it was at a distance, and lived himself to see and lament it when it was over, for a warning to its sister kingdom. For that captivity being in the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, and sixth of Hezekiah king of Judah, this prophet might easily be an eye-witness to it. His book discovers the sins, and denounces the judgments of God against a people that would not be reformed, and intimates gracious promises to the penitent. Neither all that he, nor the other prophets spoke is committed to writing, but only so much as God thought fit to be a warning to that and future ages.

Joel prophesied about the same time with Hosea and Amos; for he speaks of the same judgments of locusts, drought and fire that Amos laments. He describes the desolation made by noxious insects, calls the people to repentance, and promiseth mercy to the penitent; that God will power out his Spirit in the latter days, plead against his enemies, and do glorious things for his church in gospel times.

The time of the prophecy of Amos is plain from the first verse of his book, and from the seventh chapter and tenth verse, that it was in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel. He is not the same with

^a Hosea i. 1, 2.

with Amos the father of Isaiah; their Hebrew names are writ with different letters, of a different signification, that of Isaiah's father signifies *strong, robust*; but this prophet's name denotes a *burden*¹. He was one who carried weighty prophecies, called the *burden of the Lord*; and their families were of a different character; for Isaiah was a courtier, and Amos a country farmer. He begins with threatenings against the neighbour nations that were enemies to Israel; then reproves the people of Israel and Judah for their idolatry and other sins; exhorts them to repentance, without which their hypocritical sacrifices would not please God; foretells the judgments of God coming upon them; and concludes with predictions of setting up the Kingdom of the Messiah, under which his people should be happy.

The time of the prophesy of Obadiah is uncertain, yet with Dr. Lightfoot^m, I conceive it probable that he was contemporary with Hosea, Joel and Amos. He reproves the Edomites for the mischiefs they had done to Judah and Jerusalem, which might be when that city was plundered by the Philistines and Arabiansⁿ, or when it was oppressed by Joash king of Israel^o, or at the like occasion; for the Edomites made it their ordinary practice to take spoil of Judah, when that nation was under oppression. For which crying sin, he faithfully admonishes them, and certifies them of God's judgments, as many of the subsequent prophets also did, and concludes with promises of the restoration and reformation of Israel; that they shall be victorious over the Edomites, and

¹ Vide Leusdeni Onomasticon.
16, 17. ^o 2 Chron. xxv. 23, 24.

^m Chronica, p. 96. ⁿ 2 Chron. xxi.

and their other enemies; and that the kingdom of the Messiah shall be set up by bringing in the great salvation.

The book of Jonah is rather a history than a prophecy: But there is one prediction in it, *Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.* 'Tis probable that Jonah, of whom we have before heard in the reign of Jeroboam II. ⁹, whereby his time is evident, was the author of the book, where he mentions his own faults, after the example of Moses, and other inspired penmen, as an evidence that in their writings they designed God's glory, and not their own. The story here recorded contains remarkable instances of human infirmities in the prophet, of God's compassion to him, and a noble type of our Redeemer's burial and resurrection out of the grave on the third day ⁹.

The prophet Isaiah was contemporary with Hosea and the other prophets above-mentioned, or perhaps a little later, as appears by the first words of his book, *The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.* He continued a long time in his office. We are not indeed told in what year of Uzziah he began: But if we reckon from the fortieth year of Uzziah's reign, to the fifteenth year of Hezekiah, the time of this prince's sickness, of which Isaiah doth write, then he was near sixty years a prophet; and we are uncertain but he might have been longer. It was a great honour to him, and happiness to his country that he was so long useful in a declining time. We may suppose that

VOL. II.

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^p See p. 247.

⁹ Matth. xii 39, 40.

he began young, and held out to old age: For prophets were not as the priests, pinned down to a certain period of their life, for the beginning and ending of their ministration. His whole book is eminently useful to the church of God in all ages, for conviction of sin, direction in duty, and consolation in trouble; and for clear discoveries of the person, offices, and sufferings of Christ, with other gospel mysteries. The author may justly be esteemed a great prophet, if we consider the extent and variety of his predictions, the sublimity of the truths revealed by him; the majesty and elegance of his style, or the incomparable liveliness of his sermons. Some historical passages may be noticed from him afterwards; and 'tis not my province to enlarge on the book; this belongs to commentators.

There were several changes in the kingdom of the ten tribes, during the reign of Uzziah. Jeroboam II. began his reign with the fifteenth year of Amaziah, and reigned forty-one years*, of which, fourteen were in the time of Amaziah, and twenty-seven in the time of Uzziah, kings of Judah. Zachariah the son of Jeroboam, reigned over Israel in Samaria, in the thirty-eight year of Azariah, or Uzziah king of Judah*, whereby it appears, that between Jeroboam's death, and his son's coming to the government, the throne of Samaria was vacant eleven years from the twenty-seventh to the thirty-eighth of Uzziah; and Zachariah, who continued in the sins of his predecessors, had only possessed the crown six months, when Shallum the son of Jabeesh, slew him before the

* 2 Kings xiv. 23.

* 2 Kings xv. 8.

the people, and reigned in his stead. Thus the line of Jehu came to an end in the fourth generation, viz. Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah, according to the word of the Lord in 2 Kings x. 30. Shallum, who killed his master, had no peace; for Menahem, the son of Gadi, killed him, when he had reigned only one month. Menahem was a monster of cruelty; he not only ruined the city Tiphshab, which refused to open her gates to him; but forgetting all humanity, he ripped up the women with child. By these means he did not strengthen himself; for Pul the king of Assyria came against him; and he not daring to trust his own subjects in battle, bought peace of his adversary by a present of a thousand talents of silver, to confirm him in the kingdom. He exacted the money by military execution upon all the men of wealth among his subjects, obliging each of them to pay fifty shekels. Thus he got free of his enemy at that time; and this is the first authentic account we have of a king of Assyria. Menahem did evil in the sight of the Lord: He departed not from the idolatrous worship of the calves set up by Jeroboam the son of Nebat; yet he reigned ten years and slept with his fathers. *In the fiftieth year of Azariah, (or Uzziah) king of Judah, Pekabiah, the son of Menahem, began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years.* He continued in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and was treacherously slain in his own palace by Pekah, falling under the load of his own and his father's wickedness. Pekah the son of Remaliah, began to reign in the two and fiftieth,

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or last year of Uzziah king of Judah, and reigned twenty years: Of him we shall hear more afterwards; only we here remark, that the sins of the ten tribes were now fast hastening that kingdom to ruin; their fatal divisions at home made way for the kings of Assyria to make a prey of them, and carry them into captivity.

In the year of the world 3174, which coincides with the thirty-first of Uzziah king of Judah, the first olympiad began^x, a famous epocha among the Greeks, and over all the heathen world, beyond which they have nothing but what is fabulous and uncertain, as the Christian fathers often told them^y; and therefore I have, during this period, after the example of the great and learned Primate Usher^z, given as yet very little of profane history.

To return to the kingdom of Judah, *Jotham* was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did;—but he entered not into the temple of the Lord; and the people did yet corruptly^a. He took warning by his father's fate, not to do so presumptuous a thing, as to burn incense in the temple: But the people would not be reformed; they still sacrificed in the high places, notwithstanding the good example the king set before them. He built the high gate of the house of the Lord, fortified the wall of Ophel, erected cities in the mountains of Judah, with castles and towers to strengthen his frontiers; and he conquered

^x Vide Græca Eusebiana Scaligeri, p. 37. & 216. ^y Justin Martyr ad Græcos. p. 13 ab initio Eusebius de præp. Evang. lib. 10. cap. 10. ab initio. ^z Vide Usserii Annales, p. m. 343—44. ^a 2 Kings xv. 32,—36. 2 Chron. xxvii.

quered the Ammonites, exacted great contributions of them, even a hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, with as much barley, and became mighty in wealth and in power. Josephus^b gives him a great character, saying, he was pious towards God, just towards men, and careful of the common-wealth. At last he slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David^c. During all the time of Jotham, Pekah the son of Remaliah, reigned in Samaria. He did evil in the sight of the Lord; for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat: And in his days Tiglath-Pileser, or Pilneser, king of Assyria^d, who seems to be the son of Pul, took Ijon, Abel-beth-maacha, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, Galilee, with all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria^e. This was the beginning of the miserable and long lasting captivity of the ten tribes, which is also mentioned in 1 Chron. v. 26. the Reubenites, the Gadites, the half tribe of Manasseh, on the east side of Jordan, with the people in some of the cities in the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulon, being then carried captives.

Micah began to prophesy in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah^f. He was a citizen of Mareshah, which lies within the territories of the tribe of Judah, near the borders of the Philistines^g, and faithfully convinced the people of their sins, charging both Israel and Judah with idolatry, covetousness, oppression, contempt of the word of God, and their rulers in church and state with abuse of their power; and for

^b Antiq. lib. 9. cap. 11. prope finem. ^c A. M. 3207. Ant. C. 743.

^d 2 Chron. xxviii. 20. ^e 2 Kings xv. 29. ^f Micah i. 1. ^g Josh. xv. 44.

for these transgressions declares the judgments of God ready to break in upon them, particularly he foretels the destruction of Jerusalem: *Zion for your sake shall be plowed as a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest*^a, (which is quoted by the elders of the land, to stay the prosecution of the court against another^b famous prophet;) prophecies concerning our Saviour, and the very place where he shall be born^c, which was literally fulfilled in the New Testament^d; and comforts the people of God with promises of mercy, especially with the coming of the Messiah, and the gospel-grace through him, in the same words with Isaiah^e, who was for some time his contemporary, though Micah began several years after him.

Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign in the seventeenth year of Pekah, the son of Remaliah, 2 Kings xvi. 1. It may be indeed enquired, How doth this agree with 2 Kings xv. 30. *Hoshea the son of Elah, in the twentieth year of Jotham king of Judah, slew Pekah the son of Remaliah, and reigned in his stead?* Answer, The sacred writer having not made mention of Ahaz in 2 Kings xv. 30. thought it proper to date the year of Hoshea's coming to the kingdom from Jotham's government; which twentieth year was really the fourth of Ahaz's reign, and the twentieth after the beginning of Jotham's.

We have a very bad character of this king Ahaz: *He was twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord,—but walked*
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^a Micah iii. 12. ^b Jer. xxvi. 18. ^c Micah v. 2. ^d Matth. ii. 5, 6.
^e Compare Isaiah li. 2,—4. with Micah iv. 1,—3.

Period. V. *Of the Kings of Israel and Judah.* 239

in the way of the kings of Israel, and made molten images for Baalim; yea, he made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, and sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the bills, and under every green tree. He had no concern nor affection for the instituted worship of God, for which David and others of his predecessors were famous; no love for the temple; made no conscience of his duty, nor had any regard to his law. The kings of Israel pleaded policy and reasons of state for their idolatry, to detain the people from worship at Jerusalem, lest thereby they should be led to revolt: But Ahaz had no such pretence. Yea, he rejected the God of his fathers, and abandoned himself to the worst abominations of the heathen nations, even to the making his sons pass through the fire to Moloch, in the valley of the son of Hinnom. For these things the Lord stirred up against him Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel; who invaded his land, wasted his country, and shut him up in Jerusalem. Their design was, on taking the city, to have extirpated the house of David, and to have set up a new king in Judah, the son of Tabcal. Who this person was, we are not told. Some take him to have been a potent Jew, who stirred up this war against his master: Others think he was a Syrian, of the race of Tabrimon. But God designing only to punish Ahaz, and not to cut off the whole family of David his servant, sent the prophet Isaiah to Ahaz, to assure him that they should not prevail against the city: and for this he gave him two signs. One was, That the prophet

^m 2 Kings xvi. 2 Chron. xxviii. ⁿ Isa. vii. 1, — 6. ^o Prideaux's Connection. Vol I. p. 2. ^p Lightfoot's Chronica, p. m. 100.

phet should take a wife, who on that marriage should conceive a son, and before this child should be of age to discern between good and evil, both these kings should be cut off from the land. Which accordingly came to pass: For the prophet immediately taking a wife, before Maher-shalal-hash-baz, the son of that marriage^a, arrived to the age of discerning good and evil, both these kings were slain, Rezin in the third year of Ahaz, and Pekah the next year. The other sign was, That a virgin should conceive and bear a son, who should be called Immanuel^b; that is, *God with us*, the blessed Messiah, our Saviour; to intimate that the people might take courage, for God would not utterly destroy the house of David, till the Messiah should be born of a virgin of that race. Soon after these promises, the two kings were forced to raise the siege, and return home.

But Ahaz growing still more wicked, God brought again upon him the same confederated kings; who divided themselves into three armies, one under Rezin, a second under Pekah, and the third under Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim. Rezin, king of Syria, having loaded his army with spoils, and taken many captives, returned with them to Damascus, Pekah, with his army, marched directly against Ahaz, and overthrew him with a terrible destruction, a hundred and twenty thousand of his men being slain in one day. Of which victory Zichri taking the advantage, marched to Jerusalem, where he slew Maaseiah, the king's son, with many other principal men of the city. And both these armies of Israel on their return, carried away

^a Isaiah viii.^b Isaiah vii. 14. Matth. i. 23.

away vast spoils, with two hundred thousand men, women and children, whom they designed to sell for slaves. But a prophet of the Lord, named Oded, severely rebuked them for their cruelty to these captives. Whereupon the elders of Israel, fearing the wrath of God, would not suffer these poor people they had taken to be carried to Samaria, but clothed such of them as were naked, gave them meat and drink out of the spoils, and sent them back to their own homes. No sooner was Judah delivered from these enemies, but it was invaded by the Edomites to the south, and by the Philistines to the west, who did all the mischief in their power. Nevertheless Ahaz would not return from his evil ways, but placing his confidence, not in God, but in man, pillaged the temple of all the gold and silver that was found therein, and sent to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, to engage him to come to his assistance, promising thereon to become his servant. Tiglath laid hold of this opportunity, and marched a great army into Syria; where he slew Rezin in battle, took Damascus, and reduced all that country under his dominion: whereby he put an end to the kingdom of the Syrians in Damascus, after it had continued nine or ten generations, from the time of Rezin the son of Eliadah, who first founded it while Solomon was king of Israel. But he assisted not Ahaz to recover any place that had been taken from him by his enemies, but rather distressed him: For Ahaz was forced to raise money for the service of this ally, by cutting the vessels of the temple in pieces, and melting them down;

VOL. II.

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and then the Assyrian marched back to Damascus, where he and his successors were ill neighbours to the kings of Judah. One of the bad effects of the Assyrian greatness was, that Rezin having driven the Jews from Elath^u, their advantageous port for trade in the Red Sea; when Tiglath-pilnefer conquered Rezin, he seized Elath, and thereby put an end finally to that great profit which the Jews had long reaped from this trade. Ahaz found it necessary to overlook all these injuries, yea, even to wait on the Assyrian, as his protector and sovereign, at Damascus. While he was there, he saw an idolatrous altar, which pleased his fancy extremely: whereupon he caused take a pattern of it, which he sent to Urijah, who was priest, and 'tis like high-priest, at Jerusalem, with orders to make one like it, and place it in the room of the Lord's altar. Urijah straight complied with the orders: which he ought not to have done; for by his office he was obliged to maintain God's institutions, and to witness against innovations. And the king, upon his return, sacrificed on the altar, filled Jerusalem and Judea with heathenish idols, and shut up the temple of the Lord, as if it had been in his power to oppose the Almighty. Tiglath-pilnefer, king of Assyria, died in the twelfth year of Ahaz, according to Eusebius^x, and Salmaneser his son, who is called Shalman^y, reigned in his stead. Ahaz, being smitten of God for his sin, died in the sixteenth year of his reign^z, and thirty-sixth of his age, and was buried in the city of David, but not with a royal burial in the sepulchres of the kings, leaving the kingdom to a better

^u 2 Kings xvi. 6.^x In Chronico, sub Olymp. 8.^y Hosea x. 14.^z A. M. 3223. Ant. Chr. 727.

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better and more religious prince, Hezekiah his son, who reigned in his stead.

Hoshea the son of Elah killed Pekah the son of Remaliah, in the fourth year of Ahaz, as before^a observed, which was the twentieth year from the beginning of Jotham's government; but he seems not to have been established in the kingdom so soon: For, in 2 Kings xvii. 1. it is said, *In the twelfth year of Abaz king of Judah, began Hoshea, the son of Elah, to reign over Israel in Samaria nine years.* From the murder of Pekah, to the twelfth year of Ahaz, the government might be in the hands of the elders of Israel. When he came to the crown, matters were in a very bad state. A great part of the inheritance of the ten tribes, even that on the east side of Jordan, with several cities of Zebulon and Naphtali to the west, were in the hands of the kings of Assyria. Their sins had brought them low, and Hoshea was forced to become tributary to Salmaneser for the rest^a. Nevertheless he seems not to have been so wicked as the preceding kings of Israel: *He did evil in the sight of the Lord, but not like them.* The Jewish chronicle^b says, that the kings of Assyria having taken away the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, Hoshea removed the guards his predecessors had set to hinder their subjects to go up and worship at Jerusalem, and he allowed them to go; and we find many of the ten tribes joining with good king Hezekiah in his solemn passover at Jerusalem, and on their return concurring to destroy all the monuments of idolatry in their own country^c. But the sins of the kings of Israel, and of the body of that people

^a See p. 259. ^a 2 Kings xvii. 3. ^b Seder Olam Rabbi, cap. 21. p. m. 84, 86. ^c 2 Chron. xxx. 10, 18. and xxxi. 1.

people had been so great, that God saw fit no longer to delay their punishment. Wherefore Salmaneser, finding that Hoshea had confederated with Sabacon^d, or So, king of Egypt, that by his assistance he might throw off the yoke of the Assyrian, and therefore would pay him no more tribute, nor bring him presents, he marched an army into the heart of his kingdom, and besieged Samaria three years; at the end of which he took the city, and carried the people into captivity, fixing them in Halah, and in Habor, by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. I shall have occasion, in the sequel of this history^e, to give the most probable account of the ten tribes, and where these cities are to which they were carried; and therefore now proceed to notice, that Israel being dispossessed of the land of Canaan, the king of Assyria transplanted thither such as his own country could well spare; but these being too few to fill the land, and very wicked, who feared not the Lord, lions and other wild beasts were permitted to multiply against them. The case being represented at court, the Assyrian sent thither a priest, or priests, to teach them the manner of the god of the land. He resided at Bethel, and taught this colony a sort of mongrel religion; they worshipped their own idols out of love, and the God of Israel for fear of his judgments: "Every nation made gods of their own: the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and

^d Herodotus, lib. 2. cap. 137. ^e Chap. viii.

and Anammelech the gods of Sepharvaim." I have, in another essay^f, more particularly enquired into what was signified by these idols, which I shall not here repeat. The men of Babylon observed the profane rites of their Venus, prostituting their daughters to whoredom; the men of Sepharvaim sacrificed their children to Moloch, and others worshipped the sun under several names and representations. Thus the people of this country continued long, observing a profane mixture of heathenism and Judaism. And what became of the Samaritans in succeeding ages, we shall see afterwards; in other parts of this history.

Here ended the kingdom of the ten tribes, after it had subsisted two hundred and fifty-six years and seven months: For Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, reigned 22 years, in which 2 years of Nadab are comprehended, Baasha reigned 24 years, Elah 2, Omri 12, in which 7 days of Zimri are contained, Ahab 22, Ahaziah 2, Jehoram 12, Jehu 28, Jehoahaz 17, Joash 16, Jeroboam II. 41, the throne vacant 11, Zachariah 6 months, Shallum 1 month, Menahem 10 years, Pekah 20, the kingdom administered by elders 8 years, and Hoshea, the son of Elah, reigned 9 years. The particulars are evident from the above history, and the whole makes up the duration of this kingdom 256 years 7 months. The prediction, *Within sixty-five years shall Ephraim be broken that it be not a people*^g, may be computed from the time of Amos, who prophesied in the days of Uzziah king of Judah^h, and plainly foretold, that *the high places of Isaac should be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel should be laid waste*ⁱ.
And

^f History of the Propagation of Christianity, chap. 2. ^g Isa. vii. 8.

^h Amos i. 1. ⁱ Amos vii. 9.

And it was long ago observed by Jerom^k, that if this prophecy take its date from the twenty-fifth year of Uzziah's reign, who reigned in all fifty-two years, there will be 27 years of Uzziah, 16 of Jotham, 16 of Ahaz, and 6 of Hezekiah; which make in all sixty-five years between the deliverance and the execution of the prophecy. Now, the words of Amos being fresh in the memory of many then living, Isaiah might well have respect to it. Others^l prove, that several colonies of the Israelites were not carried into Assyria, till the time of Efarhaddon, the son of Senacherib, and grandchild of Salmaneser^m. And thus there might be time enough for these sixty-five years, from the time when Isaiah spoke the prophecy in the time of Ahaz, to the full accomplishment thereof in the days of Efarhaddon. Since either of these computations makes the event agree with the prediction, I shall not further insist upon it at this time.

§ 3. Having seen the end of the kingdom of the ten tribes in Samaria, let us go on with the kings of Judah. Hezekiah being twenty-five years old when he began to reign, he reigned twenty-nine yearsⁿ. 'Tis here objected, How could Hezekiah be twenty-five years old at his father's death, when his father lived only thirty-six years^o; for thus he must have been begotten in the eleventh year of Ahaz his father's age? Answer, 'Tis the known custom of sacred and profane writers, to omit, and sometimes to add to the number of the years they name, such as are imperfect and unfinished. Thus Ahaz might be near twenty-one years old when

^k Hieronymus in Esaia, cap. 7.

^l vii. 8.

^m Ezra iv. 2.

ⁿ 2 Kings xvi. 2.

^o Vide Poli Critica & notas in Isaia

^p 2 Kings xviii. 1, 2.

^q 2 Chron. xxix. 1.

he began to reign, and near seventeen years older when he died: And on the other side, Hezekiah, when he began to reign, might be only twenty-four years complete, and entered into his five and twentieth; and so Ahaz might be between thirteen and fourteen years old when he begot Hezekiah; which is in nowise incredible, considering the fruitfulness of the Jews, and the many promises God had made to the house of David; yea, though his father had begot him in the eleventh year of his age, there are some instances of the like in credible authors, which these who quarrel with the sacred scriptures will not deny^p. Hezekiah being come to the throne in an age fit for business, notwithstanding his descent from a bad father, and education in a very corrupt time, soon shewed that he was a religious prince; for in the very first month of the first year of his reign, he caused the gates of the temple, which his father had shut, to be opened, the house to be cleansed, the Levites to be sanctified^q, the priests to offer sacrifices, to make atonement for their own sins, and for the sins of the last reign, and the Levites to sing praises to God in the words of David and of Asaph the seer. The house being sanctified, and the priests cleansed from all monuments of idolatry, the king ordered the pass-over to be kept at Jerusalem upon the second month, which could not be done on the first; and the law had allowed such a change of time^r in necessary cases. To this solemnity he invited not only his own subjects in Judah, but also the Israelites in the other tribes, exhorting them, *not to be stiff-necked as their fathers, but to yield themselves to the*

^p See Dr. Patrick, on 2 Chron. xxix. xi. — Bocharti Phaleg, last edition, p. 920, — 927. ^q 2 Chron. xxix. ^r Numb. ix. 10, 11.

the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, to serve the Lord their God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from them*. Accordingly there was a great concourse of people met to observe the festival; for though some in Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun mocked at the call, yet a considerable number humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. They doubled the usual time of their continuance at the feast, and there was great joy; for since the time of Solomon, the son of David, there was not the like at Jerusalem. Hezekiah prayed the Lord might graciously pardon such as had been guilty of any irregularity: The Lord hearkened and healed the people; and the priests dismissed them with a solemn blessing. After the passover the people went into all the coasts of Judah and Benjamin, broke the images in pieces, cut down the groves, and demolished the high places, utterly destroying all monuments of idolatry; and these of Ephraim and Manasseh did the like in their country; even the brazen serpent that Moses had made^u, because the children of Israel in these evil times had burnt incense to it, and abused it to idolatry, Hezekiah broke it to pieces, and called it *Nehustan*, that is, a piece of brass that can do you neither good nor hurt; and therefore no fit object for religious worship^v. Wherefore 'tis great impudence in the Papists to shew to their devotees in the church of St. Ambrose at Milan^w a brazen serpent for adoration, which they pretend to be the same that Moses erected in the wilderness.

Near

* 2 Chron. xxx. 8. † 2 Chron. xxxi. 1. ‡ Numb. xxi. 9. § 2 Kings xviii. 4. ¶ Vide Sigonii Historiam de regno Italix, lib. 7.

Near the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, Sabacon, the Ethiopian, subdued Egypt, and possessed that country many years. About the time that Salmaneser besieged Samaria, he destroyed Ar, or Arne, and Kirharseth, two chief cities of Moab, whereby the predictions in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Isaiah were fulfilled. 'Tis like the Assyrian, to prevent any disturbance from that side, to hinder him in the siege, subdued Moab, and put garrisons in that country, to keep all things quiet, and to stop the incursions of the Arabs.

In the year that Samaria was taken, Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan^a, reigned at Babylon. He is, in the canon of Ptolomy, called Mardoc Empadus: And there we find^b, that before him reigned Nabonassar, fourteen years; after Nabonassar, Nadius, two years, after him Chozirus and Porus together, five years; and then Jugæus other five years; and to him succeeded Mardoc Empadus, who in the twenty-seventh year after Nabonassar, founded the kingdom at Babylon.

While Salmaneser was engaged in the siege of Samaria, Hezekiah made war upon the Philistines, whereby he not only regained all the cities of Judah, which they had taken during his father's reign, but also dispossessed them of almost all their own country, excepting Gaza and Gath. Samaria being taken, Salmaneser sent to Hezekiah, to demand the tribute that his father Ahaz had agreed to pay to the kings of Assyria; but Hezekiah, trusting in the divine support, refused the demand: Which would have brought the arms of

VOL. II.

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^a Herodotus, lib. 2. cap. 137, 139. ^b Canon Ptolomæi ab initio. ^c 2 Kings xviii. 8.

^a Isa. xxxix. 1. ^b Canon Ptolomæi ab initio.

the Assyrian straight against him; but they were diverted by another war; for Elulæus, king of Tyre, finding the Philistines brought low by war, took this opportunity to reduce Gath, which had revolted from him. The Gittites applied themselves to Salmaneser, who marched with his whole army against the Tyrians. Sidon, Ace, afterwards called Ptolemais, and other maritime towns, which had been before subject to the Tyrians, revolted to the Assyrian. Nevertheless the Tyrians, with twelve ships only, defeated the Phœnician and Assyrian fleets, consisting of sixty ships, and took five hundred of their men prisoners. This gave them such a reputation by sea, that Salmaneser thought not fit to debate with them any more in that element, but ordered his army to block up their city. The Assyrian forces stopped their aqueducts: But they digged wells, which supplied them with water, and held out five years; at the end of which Salmaneser dying, they were relieved for a time. But the Tyrians being too proud of this success, Isaiah, in his twenty-third chapter, foretold their ruin; which was accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar, as shall be observed in its proper place.

Salmaneser king of Assyria being dead, after he had reigned fourteen years*, Sennacherib his son succeeded him in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah king of Judah†. So soon as he was fixed in the throne, he renewed the demand for the tribute, which Ahaz had agreed to pay in the reign of Tiglath-Pileser his grandfather; and upon Hezekiah's refusal to comply with it, marched a great army

d Josephus Antiq. lib. 9. cap. 14 & contra Appionem, lib. 1.

e Africanus apud Syncellum, p. 74. f 2 Kings xviii. 23. Isa. xxxvi. 1.

* A. M. 3137. Ant. Chr. 713.

army into Judea to fall upon him. At that time Hezekiah falling sick of the pestilence, had a message from God by the prophet Isaiah, to set his house in order and prepare for death^a: But on his humble and fervent prayer to God, he obtained another message by the same prophet, promising him life fifteen years longer, and also deliverance from the Assyrians, who were coming against him: And to give him thorough assurance thereof, God made the sun go backwards ten degrees upon the dial of Abaz, which was miraculous. Yet these degrees, 'tis like, were only lines denoting the inequality of the hours, which might be without prolonging the day above an hour or two: And this not being occasioned by any conjunction in the heavens, but by the over-ruling hand of providence, was not so considerable as to awaken the curiosity of the neighbouring nations to mind it. And there being no histories then writ by heathens, we need not question the fact because they do not observe it. This seems to be the first and most authentic account of a sun-dial; but of this, and of the Jewish days and hours, I shall have occasion to enquire afterwards^b. According to the prediction, a lump of figs having been laid to the pestilential boil, by the prophet's direction, Hezekiah recovered within three days, and went to the house of God, to give thanks for so wonderful a deliverance.

Merodach Baladan hearing of this miraculous recovery, sent ambassadors to congratulate Hezekiah; and it is like also to enter into an alliance with him against Sennacherib, whose growing power

^a 2 Kings xx. 1. 2 Chron. xxxii. 24. Isa. xxxviii. ^b See Chap. 7. See also p. 29.

power the princes of Babylon had reason to fear, as well as the Jews. Hezekiah being well pleased with the proposals the ambassadors made, shewed them all the riches of his house, his treasury, his armoury, with all his stores. God sent him by the prophet Isaiah a rebuke for the pride of his mind which he had discovered, and a prediction that all these stores should be one day carried to Babylon; which admonition he received in a very humble and penitent manner. In the same year Sennacherib came with a great army against the fenced cities of Judah, took several of them, laid siege to Lachish, threatening Jerusalem next. Whereupon Hezekiah, by advice of his chief counsellors, made all manner of preparation for defence of the city, by repairing the walls, fortifying them with towers, and furnishing his subjects with arms and artillery. Also he took care to stop the wells without the walls of Jerusalem, and divert all the water-courses^k. And to strengthen himself further, he entered into an alliance with the king of Egypt, for their mutual defence; which Isaiah, in the thirtieth and thirty-first chapters of his prophecies, condemned as carrying in it a distrust in God, on whom alone his people should depend for their deliverance. Sennacherib being informed of all these preparations, became inclined to hearken to terms of accommodation; and it was agreed, That upon Hezekiah's paying to him three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold^l, which Dr. Prideaux^m reckons to have amounted to three hundred and fifty one thousand pounds Sterling, there should be peace. The Assyrian

^l 1 Kings xx. 12.—20 and Isa xxxix. ^k 2 Chron xxxii. ^j 2 Kings xvii. 14. ^m Connection, part 1. p. 22.

syrian having received the money, marched against Egypt; and to open his way into that country, sent Tartan, one of his generals, to take Ashdod, or Azotus: And after this, the whole army oppressed the Egyptians for three years together, destroying their cities, and carrying multitudes of them into captivity". At that time Sevechus, the son of Sabacon, or So, the Ethiopian, was king of Egypt; Herodotus ^o calls him Sethon, and represents him as a prince of bad conduct, who affecting to be the chief priest of Vulcan, gave himself wholly up to superstition, and oppressed the best of his subjects, taking from them the rights of their lands; which gave them such offence, that they would not fight for him; Whereupon he was forced to raise an army of raw, undisciplined men, whom Sennacherib easily overcame, and made what desolation in the country he pleased. He seems to have brought that destruction upon No-ammon, which the prophet Nahum ^p speaks of, saying, *She went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.* This city is the same with Thebes, famous for its hundred gates and many inhabitants; as our learned countryman, Mr. Jamieson ^q, hath more fully proved. The Greeks called it Diospolis, or the city of Jupiter, because of a famous temple built there to that deity, who was called Ammon ^r among the Egyptians. The prophet Nahum was one of the comforters of the Jews against the terror of the Assyrians, as his name imports: Though his family and

^o Isa xx ^p Lib. 2. cap. 141. ^q Chap. iii 8,—10. ^r Spicileria
 Egypti, p 33,—43. ^s Herodot. lib. 2. cap. 42.

and age are not on record, yet he seems to have lived about this time, and might have continued to the reign of Manasseh: He mentions the evil imagination of Sennacherib against Jerusalem, foretels his death in an idolatrous temple*, and prophecies of the destruction of Nineveh. All which were accomplished in due time, as shall be afterwards observed.

Sennacherib did not finish the war in Egypt with the same success as he began it; for having laid siege to Pelusium, he was forced to break up thence, because Tirhakah king of Ethiopia was coming with a great army to help Sevechus his kinsman. Whereupon the Assyrian returned to Judea, and encamped again at Lachish; where, contrary to his agreement, he renewed the war against Hezekiah, and sent Tartan, Rabsharis and Rabshakeh, three of his chief captains, with that proud, blasphemous message recorded, 2 Kings xviii. 19,—36. Rabshakeh, who delivered the speech, seems to have been the Assyrian king's chief cupbearer, as his name imports; but by his ready speaking the Hebrew tongue, he appears an apostate Jew, or one of the Israelites carried into captivity, and chose to speak that language, to make the Jews revolt; but failing of that design, the messengers returned to Sennacherib, whom they found besieging Libnah: Where hearing that Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, or of the Cushites in Arabia, was marching after him, he led forth his army, and gave him a great overthrow; whereby he executed the judgments foretold by the prophet Isaiah^u against Ethiopia and Egypt. Then he

* Nahum i. 11, 14.

^u Chap. xviii. xix.

^v Joseph. Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 1.

he wrote a letter in the same blasphemous strain with his former message to Hezekiah, defying both him and the Lord his God. The good king of Judah went to prayer, complaining of the blasphemy, and spreading the letter before the Lord, who assured him by the prophet Isaiah, that his prayer was graciously heard: *The virgin, the daughter of Zion despised the proud Assyrian.* His impotent malice was ridiculous: *He that sits in heaven did laugh at him; the Lord did put a hook in his nose, and a bridle in his lips.* And this was given as a sign, though the earth were devoured by the enemy one year, and the next was a sabbatical year, wherein they must neither sow nor reap, yet they shall be plentifully provided. According to the predictions, *The angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred four-score and five thousand men; and when they arose in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses*^a. Josephus^b says, this was by a pestilential disease bringing sudden death. Others^c think, it was done by a hot wind, frequent in those parts, destroying great numbers in a moment; for the prophet Isaiah^d said, *I will send a blast upon him*; and Jeremiah^e speaks of a *destroying wind*. However, it was a terrible effect of the wrath of the Almighty God, whom the proud Assyrian had provoked in a high degree; and he was so terrified by it, as he fled out of Judea in great confusion back to Nineveh; where he dwelt for the remnant of his life in dishonour. Herodote^f, from a disguised account of the Egyptian priests, hath the same story; he calls

^a 2 Kings xix. 39.—35. Connection, Part 1. p. 24, 25.
² cap. 141. p. 144.

⁷ Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 2.

⁸ 2 Kings xix. 7. ⁹ Chap. li. ¹⁰ Lib.

¹¹ Pridcaux's

calls the Assyrian on whom this judgment was inflicted Sancherib or Senacherib^c; and the time doth agree with that in the scriptures: Nor need we wonder that the fact is not right represented by a heathen, who from an aversion to the Jews and their religion, never speak to the honour of either the one or other. After this blow the Assyrian was mightily weakened; the Medes revolted from him, and chose Dejeses for their king^d, who enlarged and beautified the city Ecbatana, where he reigned fifty-three years. Sennacherib after his return to Nineveh, became cruel and tyrannical in his government, especially towards the Jews and Israelites carried into captivity; of whom he caused many every day to be slain^e, and cast into the streets. By this savage humour he became so intolerable, even to his own subjects, that his two eldest sons, Adramelech and Sharezer, fell upon him, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, and escaped into the land of Armenia^f, in the twenty-second year of Hezekiah, and Esarhaddon his third son reigned in his stead.

At Babylon, Merodach Baladan, or Mardoc Empadus having reigned twelve years, died, and Arkianus reigned in his place five years, beginning with the twenty-first of Hezekiah. Arkianus having no sons, there was an inter-reign of two years; at length Belibus being advanced to the throne, he sat in it three years. To him succeeded Apro-nadius, who reigned six years; and there is no more concerning these princes, but their bare names in the canon of Ptolemy.

In

^c See Hist. Propagat. of Christian. chap. 1. ^d Herodotus, lib. 1. cap. 97.—103. ^e Tobit i. 21. ^f 2 Kings xix. 37.

In Egypt, Sevechus, or Sethon, having reigned fourteen years, died in the twenty-second year of Hezekiah, and was succeeded by Tirhakah, the same who came with the Ethiopian or Cushite army to his help. He was the third and last of that race who reigned in this country.

Hezekiah king of Judah being delivered from the Assyrian army in the eighteenth year of his reign, governed for eleven years longer in great peace and prosperity, being feared and honoured by all the neighbouring nations, who observing God to be his protector, were afraid to give him disturbance. He much improved Jerusalem, by erecting magazines therein, and filling them with arms, by making a pool and a conduit to bring water into the city⁵. And for the better promoting of religion, he maintained skilful scribes to collate and write out copies of the holy scriptures; and particularly of the Proverbs of Solomon⁶: Which they did by divine conduct. At last he died at Jerusalem, when he had reigned twenty-nine years *and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David⁷: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death⁸*. The burial place of the kings of the house of David is extant at this day, about one mile without the walls of Jerusalem. There is a large court, with a gallery supported by pillars cut out of a solid marble rock; at the end of the gallery there is a door, now much filled with rubbish, by which travellers with difficulty enter into a large room of about twenty feet square; within which are several lesser rooms, and off from these several

VOL. II.

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⁵ 2 Chron. xxxii. 30. 2 King xx. 20. Eccles. xlviii. 19. ⁶ Prov. xxv. 1.
⁷ A. M. 3252. Ant. Chr. 698. 1 2 Chron. xxxii. 33.

ral niches, in which the deceased kings were deposited in marble coffins. In the lowest of these rooms at the upper end was the body of Hezekiah laid, to do him honour. The whole work cut out of a marble rock is so great, as it seems to have been done by the orders, and at the expence of king Solomon. About this time the Simeonites being straitened in their habitations, much enlarged their borders towards the south: For falling upon the Amalekites, who dwelt in part of mount Sier, and in the rich adjoining valley, they destroyed them, and dwelt in their room^k.

Though Hezekiah was a religious prince, yet he was succeeded by a very wicked son: For after him reigned Manasseh; who being a minor of twelve years of age when he came to the crown, fell into the hands of such guardians and ministers as were enemies to his father's reformation, and framed him so as he proved the most impious towards God, and most tyrannical to his subjects of any that ever reigned in Jerusalem. For he went beyond Ahaz his grand-father in every abomination. Ahaz shut up the house of God; but he set up an image in the sanctuary, and built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord^l. He made the devil his oracle, practised witchcrafts, dealt with familiar spirits, conjurors, and fortune-tellers, made his children pass thro' the fire to Moloch, and filled all Judah and Jerusalem with his high places, idols, groves and idolatrous altars; and made his subjects conform to these abominations, by a terrible persecution,

^k 1 Chron. iv. 24, 39,—43. ^l 2 Kings xxi. 2 Chron. xxxiii.

cution, whereby he filled the land with innocent blood. The Lord witnessed against these evils by his servants the prophets^m. Habakkuk, though the time of his prophesy, nor the family he came of, be not upon record; yet is thought to have exercised his office in the reign of Manasseh. He foretels the destruction coming by the Chaldeansⁿ; calls the people to live by faith, and to beware of apostacy in such an evil time. But Manasseh slighted the warnings, treated the prophets with contempt: Some of them he put to death^o; and particularly, 'tis said that in his time Isaiah suffered martyrdom, being cruelly sawn asunder; which some infer from Heb. xi. 37. By these abominations God was so justly provoked, that he declared *he would stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and would wipe Jerusalem of its inhabitants, as a man wipeth a dish, turning it upside down^p*. Which was afterwards accomplished in the captivity. And among all the iniquities which drew down these heavy judgments, the sins of Manasseh are always particularly named^q.

In the seventh year of Manasseh, Apronadius king of Babylon died; and was succeeded by Regibulus, who reigned only one year. After him Meflessi-mordacus had that kingdom, and held it four years^r. In the eleventh year of Manasseh, died Tirhakah king of Egypt, after he had reigned eighteen years^s. The Egyptians, after his death, not being able to agree about the succession, continued two years in a state of anarchy; till

^m 2 Kings xxi. 10. ⁿ Hab. i. 5.—10. ^o Vide Joseph. Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 3. p. 333. ^p 2 Kings xxi. 12, 13. ^q 2 Kings xxiii. 26. and xxiv. 3. Jer. xv. 4. ^r Canon Ptolemæi. ^s Africanus apud Syncellum, p. 74.

till at length twelve of their principal men conspiring together¹, seized the kingdom; and dividing it into twelve parts, governed it by a joint confederacy fifteen years. About the same time the like confusion happened at Babylon: For Mesechmordacus leaving no son behind him, there followed an anarchy for eight years together². Of which Esarhaddon king of Assyria taking advantage, seized Babylon, and reigned over both it and Assyria sixteen years, being called in the canon of Ptolemy, Assaradinus; but he is named in sacred scripture, *The king of Assyria*³, *Esarhaddon*⁴, and, *The great and noble Asnappar*⁵, being a prince of more virtue and worth than his predecessors.

In the twentieth year of Manasseh⁶, Esarhaddon having settled his authority at Babylon, resolved to recover what his father Sennacherib had lost in Syria and Palestine, when his army was destroyed before Jerusalem. To this end he marched with a great army into the territories of the ten tribes, and carried thence a multitude of the Israelites captive⁷: And this was just sixty-five years after Isaiah⁸ prophesied in the first of Ahaz, that *within that space Ephraim shall be broken that it be not a people*. Having possessed himself of the land of Israel, he sent a part of his army into Judea, to reduce that country also; who having overcome Manasseh, took him prisoner in a thicket of thorns⁹, and carried him to Babylon: Where his fetters and prison brought him to a due sense of his great sin, so as *he besought the Lord his God,* and

¹ Herodotus, lib. 2. cap. 147. Diodorus Siculus, lib. 2. cap. 66. ² Canon Ptolemæi. ³ 2 Kings xvii. 24. ⁴ Ezra iv. 2. ⁵ Ezra iv. 10.

⁶ A. M. 3272. Ant. Chr. 678. ⁷ Ezra iv. 2, 10. ⁸ Chap. vii. 8.

⁹ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11. Joseph. Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 4.

and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers: who was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom; where he knew that the Lord he was God. He abolished those idolatrous profanations of the temple, and in other parts of the land, which he had before introduced, and restored in many things the reformation of Hezekiah his father; wherefore God gave him a longer reign than any that ever sat on the throne of David; for he reigned fifty-five years. And it is to be hoped, that in the beginning of his reign, matters went well, as his father had left them. After his repentance, he again favoured religion: And, no doubt, when things were at the worst, God had his remnant in Judah who kept their integrity.

To this time may be referred the accomplishment of the prophesy of Isaiah^d, concerning the removal of Shebna the chief minister of state, and the advancement of Eliakim the son of Hilkiah in his place. Shebna being a very wicked man, was fit to serve the corrupt inclinations of Manasseh in the worst part of his reign; and therefore was made the first minister of state: And Eliakim being a religious person, was quite laid aside. But when Esarhaddon invaded Judea, Shebna was taken prisoner with his master, and detained captive in Babylon to the day of his death; and therefore Manasseh, on his repentance and return to Jerusalem, having resolved on other measures, called for Eliakim, and put the management of his affairs into his hands; who being a person of great wisdom, justice and piety, soon re-established

^d Isaiah xxii. 15,—17.

ed them upon the same footing as they had been in the days of Hezekiah; and therefore he is supposed to have been high-priest, and hath the character given him of a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house Judah: Yea, our Lord's dignity is described in the same terms that were given to Eliakim*.

In the twenty-eighth year of the reign of Manasseh, the twelve confederated sovereigns of Egypt, after they had jointly reigned there fifteen years, falling out among themselves, expelled Psammiticus out of his share†. But he flying to the fenny country, hid himself there, till he got together, out of the Arabian robbers, and the pirates of Caria and Ionia, such a number, as with the Egyptians of his own party made a considerable army: With which he marched against his eleven colleagues; whom he overthrew in battle, slew several of them, drove the rest out of the country, and seizing the whole kingdom, reigned there fifty-four years. So soon as he had settled his affairs at home, he entered into a war with the king of Assyria, about the boundaries of their two empires, which continued many years. In the beginning thereof, he found Ashdod so strong a barrier, that it cost him a blockade of nine and twenty years before he could make himself master thereof. While part of his army lay before this city, the rest carried on a war against the other parts of Palestine; which seems to have obliged Manasseh to fortify Jerusalem, and to put strong garisons in all his frontier towns‡: For 'tis like, when he was released

* Compare Isaiah xxii. 22 with Rev. iii. 7. † Herodotus, lib. 2. cap. 151, — 157. Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1. cap. 66, 67. ‡ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14.

leased out of prison, he paid homage to the Assyrians for his possessions, and was obliged to stand for their side in the war against the Egyptians.

In the thirty-first year of Manasseh, died Esarhaddon, after he had reigned thirty-nine years over the Assyrians, and thirteen over the Babylonians, and Salsducheus his son reigned in his stead^a twenty years. In the twelfth year of his reign he fought a great battle in the plains of Ragau, with Dejoces, king of Media; whom he put to flight, and pursued to the adjacent mountains; where he cut him off, with all his army, and followed the blow, till he made himself master of all the cities of Media, and particularly of Ecbatana, the royal seat of that empire, and then returned in triumph to Nineveh; where he and his army feasted for one hundred and twenty days.

Here Dr. Prideaux¹ placeth the history of Judith, where the cruel tyranny, pride and luxury of Holofernes and his army of Assyrians is described; and at the same time the virtues of the chaste, pious, prudent, humble and courageous widow Judith are extolled, by whose conduct Holofernes was killed, the Jewish state delivered, and settled in peace. But though this story be entertaining, yet I cannot but join with orthodox protestant divines, in their opinion not only that the book is apocryphal, being never owned by the church of the Jews, *to whom were committed the oracles of God*², nor writ in the Hebrew language, nor acknowledged by Christ or his apostles; but also that it is inconsistent with true history and chronology¹:
for

^a Canon Ptolemæi. i Connection, part 1, p. 35,—42. ² Rom. iii.

2. I See more of this argument in Chamieri Paustratia, Tom. 1. p. 117,—127. De mendacis historiæ Judith. Heideggeri Enchirid. Biblicum, p. 489 & seqq. and others.

for there is no mention of the facts therein related, neither in the sacred scriptures, nor in Josephus, nor in any other ancient monument. There was no such king as Nebuchadnezzar then reigning in Nineveh, nor an Arphaxad reigning in Media, who was founder of Ecbatana^m, in the reign of Manasseh. However, the learned arch-deacon pretends, that by the former may be understood Sardanapalus, and by the latter Dejoces; yet this is said without ground. Besides, the question of Holofernes, *Tell me, O Cananean, what is that people who live in the hill-country, what cities do they inhabit? what is the multitude of their forces? wherein consists their strength and power? have they any king or captain of their army?*ⁿ is like that of one wholly ignorant of the state of the country; not of a general who should understand the strength of the kingdom he is coming to subdue. Nor is the answer of Achior^o very likely. How comes the chief management of the public affairs of state to be represented in the book of Judith as only in the chief priest, without any mention made of the king or chief governor; since this is inconsistent with the whole Jewish history, not only from the reign of Saul to the captivity, but even for some ages after? Finally, 'tis said, *Judith lived in the house of her husband an hundred and five years; and in all the days of her life there was none that disturbed the peace of Israel, nor for many days thereafter*^p. When Judith killed Holofernes, she is said to have been a young woman, able to charm that prince with her beauty; consequently peace must have continued in Israel at least eighty years: Which they

^m Judith i. 4. ⁿ Judith v. 2. ^o Judith vi. 2. ^p Judith xvi. 23, 25.

they never enjoyed since they were a nation, nor
 scarce any other people. This is an objection
 which Dr. Prideaux owns, is not in his power to
 answer: And indeed, it destroys the authority of
 the whole book.

To go on with our history; in the fifty-first
 year of Manasseh, died Sardanapalus king of Baby-
 lon and Assyria, and Chyniladatus^a reigned in his
 room twenty-two years. Dejoes king of Media
 being dead, after a reign of fifty-three years, Phra-
 ortes his son succeeded, and governed Media twen-
 ty-two years.

Manasseh king of Judah having reigned fifty-
 five years, and lived sixty-seven, died at Jerusa-
 lem^b; and they buried him in the garden of his
 own house. Nothing of that honour was done
 to him at his funeral, as to his father. Wicked
 men, though penitents, may recover their comfort
 sooner than their credit.

To him succeeded Ammon his son, who gave
 himself up to all manner of wickedness and im-
 piety; for he sacrificed to the carved images that
 his father had made, and served them. He ex-
 ceeded the wickedness of the first part of his fa-
 ther's reign, and never imitated him in repentance.
 Whereon the servants of his house conspired a-
 gainst him, and wickedly slew him, after he had
 reigned two years: But the people of the land
 put all of them to death who had murdered the
 king, and buried him in the garden of Uzzi-
 ah, his son, succeeded him in the kingdom,
 being then but eight years old^c. His early piety,
 Vol. II. *Ben Jabbel's Conspiracy* walking

^a Canon Ptolomæi. ^b 2 Kings xxi. 18. & Chron. xxxiii. 20. ^c A. M. 3309. Ant. Chr. 641. ^d 2 Kings xxi. 29, 30. & Chron. xxxiii. 21, 22. ^e A. M. 3309. Ant. Chr. 641.

walking in the way of David his father, without turning aside to the right hand, or to the left¹, is rather to be ascribed to the sovereign free grace of God, than to the good conduct of his guardians. The Lord made him, though born of wicked parents, though under the influence of evil example, who no doubt advised him to tread in his father's steps, to be an eminent saint, and to persevere in holiness all the days of his life, without going aside either to superstition or profaneness.

In the sixth year of Josiah, Phraortes, king of Media, having brought under him all the upper Asia, to the north of Mount Taurus, and the river Halys; and also having subdued the Persians, marched against the Assyrians, with a design to take Nineveh; but there had the misfortune to be overthrown in the attempt², and both he and his army perished, when he had reigned twenty-two years.

Josiah, in the eight year of his reign³, being then sixteen years old, began the reformation of his kingdom, by purging out all monuments of idolatry that had been introduced by his father and grandfather, and sought the Lord his God with all his might.

Cyaxares the son of Phraortes succeeded his father in Media⁴, and drew together a great army, to be revenged on the Assyrians for the late loss, wherein his father and his army perished; and having overthrown them, laid again siege to Nineveh, called by Herodote, Ninus; but before he could make any progress, he was called to defend his own territories against another adversary; for

¹ 2 Kings xxii. 2. ² Herodotus, lib. I. cap. 102. ³ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3. ⁴ Herodotus, lib. cit. cap. 103.

for the Scythians, under Madyes the son of Prothiyas, from the parts about Palus Mæotis, passing round Mount Caucasus, had made an inroad upon him; and he had bad success against them; for they vanquished him in battle, dispossessed him of all the upper Asia, and reigned there twenty-eight years, during which time they enlarged their conquests into Syria, as far as the borders of Egypt. But Psammiticus, king of Egypt, prevailed on them with entreaties and large gifts, that they proceeded no further. In this expedition they seized on Bethshean^a, a city in the tribe of Manasseh, to the west side of Jordan, and kept it as long as they staid in Asia; wherefore from them it was named Scythopolis, or the city of the Scythians. How far they ravaged Judea at that time, is not on record, only Herodote^a tells us, that some of the Scythian stragglers robbed the temple of Venus Urania, at Ascalon, for which they and their posterity were afflicted with em-
rods for a long while.

Josiah, in the twelfth year of his reign, being twenty years of age, proceeded to perfect that reformation which he had begun; and to that end purged Judah and Jerusalem of the high places and the groves, broke down the altars of Baalim, with the molten and carved images, made dust of them, which he strewed upon the graves of them that had sacrificed; and when he had thus cleansed Judah and Jerusalem, he went into the cities of Ephraim and Manasseh, which seem then to have been subject to him, and did the same^b. In the thirteenth year of Josiah, Jeremiah^c was called
to

^a Syncellus, p. 214. ^A Herodotus, lib. 2, cap. 105. ^b 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, — 7. ^c Jer. i. 2.

to the prophetic office, which he discharged for above forty years, warning Judah and Jerusalem of the wrath of God for their iniquities, and calling them to repentance, in order to turn it away, till on their continuing obstinate in their evil ways, it was poured out to their destruction. The prophet Zephaniah did also execute his office in the reign of Josiah*. He foretells the general destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the Chaldeans for their sins, which had provoked God, calls them to repentance, threatens the neighbour nations with the like destruction, and gives encouraging promises of their joyful return out of captivity in due time, with a reference to the grace of the gospel.

In the fifteenth year of Josiah, Chyniladanus king of Babylon and Assyria, having by his effeminate government for twenty-two years*, rendered himself contemptible to his people, Nabopolassar, general of his army, took the advantage to set up for himself; and being a Babylonian by birth, made use of his interest there, to seize that part of the Assyrian empire, and reigned there twenty-one years.

Josiah, in the eighteenth year of his reign*, took special care to repair the house of God: To that end he sent several officers of his court to take account of the money collected for it, and to command Hilkiah the high-priest to see it laid out for doing the work. In pursuance of this order the high-priest took a view of the house, to see what was necessary to be done; and while he was examining every place, he found an authentic copy of

* Zeph. i. 1. * Canon Ptolomæi. * A. M. 3327. Ant. Chr. 623.

of the law of the Lord, which, 'tis like was hid in the time of Manasseh, that it might not be destroyed. Blessed be God, the Bible may now be in every body's hand: Though 'tis a jewel, 'tis no rarity. This copy, Hilkiah sent by Shaphan the scribe to the king, who read some part of it. This place, as the Jewish doctors think, was the threatenings denounced against those who disobey the law in Deut. xxviii. In hearing thereof, good Josiah rent his clothes, knowing how much the people and their fathers had by their sins deserved these curses. To ease his mind, he sent Hilkiah the high-priest, with some officers of the court to Huldah the prophetess, to enquire of the Lord. She answered, That the Lord would bring evil upon Jerusalem, and the inhabitants thereof, for their apostacy, idolatry, and other transgressions, the wrath of God would be poured out on them not to be quenched: But as to Josiah, *because his heart was tender, and he humbled himself, the evil shall not come in his days; he shall come to his grave in peace.* For though he died in battle, yet he died in peace and favour with God before the people were carried into captivity. However, the good king, to appease the wrath of God, and to carry on a work of reformation, as far as he could, called a solemn assembly of all the elders of the people; where, after the reading of the book of the law to them for their instruction, both he and the people publicly entered into a solemn covenant, to walk after the Lord, to keep his commandments, testimonies and statutes. After this he made another progress through the land to purge it of all abominations and monuments of idolatry; all

all which he rooted out ^a; particularly, he destroyed the altar and high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat had built at Bethel; whereby he fulfilled what a man of God had prophesied of him by name, many ages before ^b: And he made the same reformation in all the cities of Samaria. And when the next passover approached, he caused that feast to be kept with so great solemnity, as it not only exceeded that in the days of Hezekiah, but also all others, from the days of Samuel the prophet, unto that time ^c.

In the twenty-fifth year of Josiah, died Psammiticus king of Egypt ^d, after he had reigned fifty-four years, and was succeeded by Necus his son, who in holy scripture is called Pharaoh-Necho. He made an attempt to join the Nile and the Red Sea, by drawing a canal from the one to the other; but after he had lost an hundred and twenty thousand men in that work, he was forced to desist from it; but had better success in another undertaking: For we are told ^e, that he having got some expert Phœnician sailors into his service, sent them out by the coasts of the Red Sea, to discover the coasts of Africa, who having performed their voyage in the third year, came home thro' the streights of Gibraltar, called by Herodote, the *Pillars of Hercules*, and the Mediterranean sea to Egypt. This was an extraordinary voyage in those times; which was more certainly performed by Vasquez di Gama, about two thousand one hundred years after, in the year of our Lord 1497, when a trade was opened from Europe to the eastern

^a 2 Kings xxiii.

^b 1 Kings xiii 2.

^c 2 Chron. xxxv.

^d Herodote, lib. 2. cap. 157, 158.

^e Idem, lib. 4. cap. 42.

eastern parts of the world, which hath continued ever since.

In the twenty-ninth year of Josiah, which was the twenty-third of Cyaxares king of Media, Nabopolassar king of Babylon, having made an affinity with Astyages^m, the eldest son of Cyaxares, by the marriage of Nebuchadnezzar his son with Amytis, the daughter of Astyages, entered into a confederacy with him against the Assyrians; and joining their forces, they besieged Nineveh: And after taking the place, and killing the king thereof, to gratify the Medes, they utterly destroyed that great ancient city; and from that time Babylon became the sole metropolis of the Assyrian empire. Straboⁿ says, That Ninus, or Nineveh, was bigger than Babylon; and Diodorus Siculus^o affirms it was 480 furlongs in circuit, which makes sixty of our miles. And this agrees well with the account given by the prophet, Jonah iii. 3. that it *was an exceeding great city, of three days journey*: For twenty miles is as much as one can well go in circuit in one day. In the destruction thereof, the predictions of the prophets, Jonah iii. 4. of Nahum ii. 3. and Zephaniah ii. 13,—15. were all accomplished.

Here ends the apocryphal book of Tobit^p, which besides the arguments justly used against these books^q, affords many arguments of itself to prove that 'tis not canonical, nor any part of the infallible rule of faith and manners. For how comes an angel, under the name of Raphael, there to pretend to be born of the children of Naphtali, carried

^m Herodote, lib. 1. cap. 107. Eusebius in Chron. fol. m 51. ⁿ Strabo lib. 16. p. 737. See Vol. I, p. 149. ^o Diodorus Siculus, lib. 2 cap. 3.

^p Tobit xiv. 17. ^q See page 283, 284.

barred captive into Nineveh? To be sure, a good angel would not tell such a false story. How comes the angel to be named *Raphael*, the physician of God, and the devil to be called *Asmodeus*? These strange names could proceed from nothing but Jewish fables. The story of an angel accompanying Tobias in a long journey, under the shape of Azarias; the account of Raguel's daughter; the fighting away of the devil by the smoke of the heart and liver of a fish, with the cure of Tobit's blindness, by the gall of the same fish; look more like the fables of Homer, than the writings of a sacred historian. We know that devils are cast out by fasting and prayer¹, not by abominable charms. The speech of the angel, in Tobit iii. 15. "I am Raphael, one of the holy angels which stand before the Lord, and offer the prayers of saints to God," plainly favours idolatry and angel-worship, joining creatures with our only Mediator, in the performance of his office. These, besides other things observed by learned men on this subject², shew that this book is not canonical; or, as a Jewish chronologer³ speaks, that 'tis full of idle, foolish sayings.

The Babylonians and the Medes having destroyed Nineveh, as hath been told, their neighbours became jealous of their power; and to check it, Necho king of Egypt, in the thirty-first and last year of Josiah⁴, marched with a great army towards Euphrates, to make war, as Josephus⁵ says, "upon those who had dissolved the Assyrian empire." Which shews that this war commenced immediately

¹ Tobit v. 5. vii. 3, 4. ² Tobit iii. 8. ³ Tobit vi. 9, 10. ⁴ Matth. xvii. 21. ⁵ Reynoldi prælectiones, Heideggeri Enchiridion Biblicum, pag. 470, & seqq. ⁶ Ganz Tiemach David, p. m. 170. ⁷ Antiq. lib. 10, cap. 6. ab init. ⁸ A. M. 3340. Ant. Chr. 600.

immediately after the destruction of Nineveh, as before observed. Upon Necho's taking his way through Judea, Jothah resolved to hinder his march; and to this end posted his forces in the valley of Megiddo: Whereupon Necho let him know that the war was designed against others, and desired him not to meddle in it, lest it should turn to his hurt*. Jothah not hearkening to this advice, was overthrown and sore wounded in the battle; of which he died at his return to Jerusalem. 'Tis the opinion of many, that Jothah engaged rashly in this war; but the learned Dr. Prideaux† is of another mind, and not without reason; That from the time of Manasse's restitution, the kings of Judah were homagers to the kings of Babylon, and bound by oath to adhere to them, and defend that border of the empire against all their enemies, especially against the Egyptians: And in consequence of this contract, Jothah was obliged to venture on this war. To this end the Babylonians had conferred upon him the ancient inheritance of the ten tribes, though the conquest thereof had been begun by Tiglath-pileser, and afterwards finished by Salmaneser and Esarhaddon. It is evident that Jothah's reformation went over Bethel, Samaria, and all the tribes, as well as Judea; and that Megiddo, where he fought, was in the tribe of Manasseh, on the west, or this side of Jordan; which territories he was obliged to defend by the said homage. Herodotus‡ mentions this war, when he tells, "That Neco king of Egypt fought with the Syrians at Mag-

VOL. II.

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dolo,

* 2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30. 2 Chron. xxxv. 20.—25. † Connections, part i. p. m. 32, & seq. ‡ Josh. xvii. 11. Judges i. 27. Lib. i. cap. 149.

dolo, gained the victory, and after the battle seized the great city Cadytis." We see, in 2 Kings xxiii. 31,—35. a plain account of what Pharaoh-nechoh did at Jerusalem; and that Necos is the heathen name of this Egyptian king; and Cadytis, which is near of kin to Kadesh, *holy*, is very applicable to that city, hath been more fully insisted upon by others*. The death of so excellent a prince was justly lamented by all his subjects, as being the beginning of all their sorrows; for from his death they had no time of prosperity, till after the captivity. This was thoroughly seen by the prophet Jeremiah, who penned a lamentation, now lost, upon this doleful occasion†; and which was distinct from the book of *Lamentations* still extant in the canon of the holy scriptures, which the prophet wrote upon the destruction of Jerusalem. Not only this prophet, but all the singing men and women spake of Josiah in their sorrows: And it was mentioned long after this, by the mourning of Haddadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo‡. This city was afterwards named Maximianopolis§, and was near the place where this pious prince and great reformer got his deadly wounds.

After the death of Josiah, the people of the land took Jehoahaz his son, who was also called Shal-lum¶, and made him king. He was unlike his father, for he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and therefore was soon tumbled down from his throne: For Pharaoh-nechoh having defeat the Babylonians at the river Euphrates, and taken Carchemish**, a great city in those parts, which

* Jamesoni Spicilegia, cap. 2. p. 25. Prideaux's Connection, part 1. p. 57. † 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. § Zech. xii. 11. ¶ Hieronymus. † 2 Chron. xxxvi. 1. ‡ 2 Kings xxiii. 31. Jer. xxii. 11. § Joseph. Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 6.

which he secured with a good garrison. On his return to Egypt, hearing that Jehoahaz had taken upon him to be king of Judah without his consent, he sent for him to Riblah in Syria; where he put him in chains, and sent him prisoner to Egypt, where he died¹. Before his captivity he reigned only three months; which seem to be a part of the last year of Josiah^m, and therefore enter not into chronology: And he seems to have been younger than Jehoiakim his brother; for he was only twenty-three years old, when his brother was twenty-fiveⁿ, and yet the people of the land chose him upon his father's death.

Jehoahaz being carried prisoner into Egypt, Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim king in his stead, changing his name into Jehoiakim^o, and put the land to an annual tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold, (which amounts to fifty-seven thousand five hundred pounds Sterling) and then returned to his own country. Jehoiakim, when he began the administration of the kingdom, followed the evil example of his brother Jehoahaz, of his grandfather Amon, and his great grandfather Manasseh; but despised the reformation of his religious father Josiah. The body of the people, who never heartily liked amendment of life, acceded to the corrupt inclinations of their present sovereign. Wherefore the prophet Jeremiah^p went into the king's house, and there denounced judgments against him and his family, if he did not repent; and after that went into the temple, and there spake to all the people^q after the same

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 3. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 3. Jer. xxii. 11, 12. ^m Jer. xxv. 3.
ⁿ 2 Kings xxiii. 31, 36. 2 Chron. iii. 15, 16. ^o 2 Chron. xxxvi. 2, 4.
^p Jer. xxii. ^q Jer. xxvi.

same manner. The priests who attended the temple being offended with this freedom, sought Jeremiah to put him to death; but Ahikam, one of the chief lords of the council, so far befriended the prophet, as he got him acquitted by the vote of the princes, and of the elders of the people then present. Uriah, another prophet of the Lord, who had prophesied in the same manner, did not so easily escape: For Jehoiakim sought to put him to death; and though he fled to Egypt, the king got him seized there, and brought him up to Judah, where he caused kill him with the sword, and made his dead body to be thrown into the graves of the common people; which hastened on the judgments of God against the king and the land. In the third year of Jehoiakim, Nabopolassar king of Babylon finding, that on the king of Egypt's taking Carchemish, all Syria and Palestine had revolted to him, took his son Nebuchadnezzar into partnership with him in the empire, and sent him with an army into those parts. From hence the Jewish computation of the years of Nebuchadnezzar begin, so as the end of the third, or beginning of the fourth year of Jehoiakim, was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar; which was the twenty-third, from the thirteenth of Josiah, in which Jeremiah began to prophesy; but by the Babylonish account, the reign of Nebuchadnezzar began upon his father's death, two years after this. Both computations being found in scripture, this ought to be noticed for reconciling them.

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar having defeated the army of Pharaoh-nechoh, at

¹ Jer. xxvi. 20. — 23. ² Joseph. Antiq. lib. 10 cap. 7. ³ Jer. xxv. 1. Dan. 1. 1. ⁴ Jer. xxv. 3.

at the river Euphrates, and retaken Carchemish¹; where vengeance was taken for the death of good king Josiah, he marched towards Palestine, to recover these provinces to the Babylonish empire. On his approach, the Rechabites, who, according to the institution of Jonadab their father, abstained from wine, and had hitherto lived in tents, retired for their safety to Jerusalem². The same year Jeremiah³ prophesied of the coming of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem, and of the captivity of seventy years that should ensue. But those warnings having no effect, so as to bring the people to repentance, God commanded the prophet to write in a roll all the words of his prophecies which he had spoke, from the thirteenth of Josiah to that time, when Jeremiah called Baruch, the son of Neriah, a ready scribe, who wrote all that God ordered⁴, and went up and read it on the great feast of expiation, September tenth, in the temple before the people. Jeremiah could not go himself, being shut up in prison, but Baruch was sent to do it; and he being afraid of the threatenings contained in the roll, the Lord comforted him⁵, intimating, That though these calamities should come upon the Jews, yet he should have his own life for a prey in all places wheresoever he should go. In November thereafter Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, made himself master of it⁶, and having taken Jehoiakim prisoner, put him in fetters to carry him to Babylon. But upon his submission to become a servant, and tributary to the Babylonians⁷, Nebuchadnezzar marched from Jerusalem

¹ Jer. xli. 1.² Jer. xlv.³ Jer. xxxv. 6.—11.⁴ 2 Kings xxiv. 1. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6. Dan. i. 1, 2, 4.⁵ Jer. xxv.⁶ Jer. xxxvi. 6.⁷ Jer. xxxv. 6. Dan. i. 1, 2, 4.

Jerusalem to prosecute his victories against the Egyptians. But before he removed, he caused great numbers of the Jews to be sent captives to Babylon; and particularly gave orders to Asphenaz, the master of the eunuchs^a, to carry off such of the royal seed, and of the nobility, as he found to be of the fairest countenance and best parts: Among whom were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; whereby was fulfilled the word of the Lord spoken by Isaiah to Hezekiah king of Judah^b, above one hundred years before. At the same time also he carried away a great part of the vessels of the house of the Lord, to put them in the house of Bel his idol at Babylon^c. The people being thus carried into captivity, the sons of the royal family and the nobility being made eunuchs and slaves in the palace of the king of Babylon, the vessels of the temple being taken thither, the king made a tributary, and the whole land brought into servitude under the Babylonians; from hence must be reckoned the beginning of the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity foretold by the prophet Jeremiah^d; and the fourth year of Jehoiakim must be the first year in that computation^e. And therefore here ends this period, from the building of Solomon's temple, to the first year of the captivity. Only we may observe, that the Scythians, who had for twenty-eight years^f held all the Upper Asia, comprehending the two Armenias, Cappadocia, Pontus, Colchis and Iberia, were this year driven out of it. The Medes, whom they had dispossessed of these provinces, had long endeavoured

^a Dan. i. 3.—8. ^b Isa. xxxix. 7. ^c 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7. ^d Dan. i. 2.

^e Jer. xxv. 12. and xxix. 10. ^f See page 187.

^g A. M. 3344. Ant. Chr. 606.

endeavoured to recover them by open force; but finding themselves unable to succeed this way, they at length accomplished it by treachery: For under the covert of a peace, they invited many of them to a feast; where having made them drunk^t, they slew them all. After which, having subdued the rest, they recovered from them all they had lost, and again extended their empire to the river Halys, which had been the ancient borders of it towards the west.

Having explained the sacred history, removed and answered the questions that occur in the chronology of that time, and given a view of the affairs of the world during this period; it now remains to account for the years from the building of the temple to the beginning of the seventy years captivity. I have before¹ stated them at 408 years, from the year of the world 2936, to the year 3344, or from the year before the birth of Christ 1014, to the year 606. The particular enumeration of the years, with the scripture-texts to prove the same, here follow: Solomon, after the building of the temple, reigned 37 years^m, Rehoboam 17ⁿ, Abijah 3^o, Aza 41^p, Jehoshaphat 25^q, Jehoram 8^r, (but 4 of these being deduced, as included in his father's reign, there remain only 4 years of his reign to enter into chronology) Ahaziah 1^s, Athaliah 6^t, Joash 40^u, Amaziah 29^v, Uzziah 52^w, Jotham 16^x, Ahaz 16^y, Hezekiah 29^b, Manasseh 55^c, Amon 2^d, Josiah 31, (in which

^t Herodot. lib. 1. cap. 106.

¹ See page 170.

^m 1 Kings vi. 1. with

xl. 43.

ⁿ 1 Kings xiv. 21.

^o 1 Kings xv. 2.

^p 1 Kings xv. 10.

^q 1 Kings xxii. 42.

^r 2 Kings viii. 17.

^s 2 Kings viii. 26.

^t 2 Kings xi.

^u 2 Kings xii. 1.

^v 2 Kings xiv. 2.

^w 2 Kings xv. 2.

^x 2 Kings xv.

^y 2 Kings xvi. 2.

^b 2 Kings xviii. 2.

^c 2 Kings xxi. 1.

^d 2 Kings

xxi. 19.

which 3 months of Jehoahaz's reign are included) and Jehoiakim, before the beginning of the captivity, reigned 4 years: Which, being all put together, make up the sum of this period, as above-expressed, to be 408 years.

PERIOD VI.

From the beginning, to the end of the Babylonish captivity, Jer. xxv. 11, 12. and xxix. 10. containing the space of 70 years.

JEHOIAKIM, instead of being amended by those sad calamities before related, which, by the hand of God had been inflicted upon him and his kingdom, rather became worse under them; and Judah and Jerusalem kept pace with him in wickedness, notwithstanding Jeremiah the prophet was constantly exhorting them to turn to the Lord their God, that their destruction might be prevented. They having, on the ninth month proclaimed a fast, to lament the miseries they had suffered in taking Jerusalem the former year, the prophet sent Baruch again to read the roll of the prophecies and warnings before them; which he did in the chamber of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan the scribe, this being the room where, it seems, the king's council used to sit, at the east gate of the temple. Micaiah, the son of Gemariah, went straight to the palace, and informed the king's council; who sent for Baruch, and caused him sit down and read the roll. Upon hearing

* 2 Kings xlii. 1. with xlii. 31.

* A. M. 3148. Ant. Chr. 603.

* Jer. xxv. 1, 11, 12.

* Jer. xxvi. 9, — 32.

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hearing it, and being told that it was all dictated by the prophet, they were much afraid, and desired him to leave the roll, and that he and Jeremiah might go and hide themselves, that none might find them; and went in, and informed the king of what had pass. Whereupon the king sent for the roll, and caused Jehudi read it to him: But after hearing three or four leaves thereof, as he was sitting in his winter parlour, he cut it out with a penknife, and cast it into the fire before him on the hearth, till the roll was all consumed, though some of his council advised him not to do it. This was an impudent affront to the God of heaven, whose message this was. It declared that he was resolved to persist in his sins, that he could not bear reproof, and that he bore an indignation at Baruch and Jeremiah; for he issued out an order to apprehend them; but they had hid themselves, and could not be found. The roll being burnt, another was writ from the mouth of the prophet, wherein was contained all that was in the former roll, with the addition of many like words, concerning the destruction of the land of Judah, and the ruin of Jehoiakim and his house.

Nebuchadnezzar departing from Jerusalem, carried on for this year the war against the Egyptians, with such success as he drove them out of all Syria and Palestine, from the river Euphrates to the river of Egypt: Where the river of Egypt is not the Nile, but a small rivulet in the desert, that was a known boundary between Ganaan and Egypt. Towards the end of this year died Nabopolassar king of Babylon, the father of Nebuchadnezzar,

chadnezar, after he had reigned twenty-one years*. Whereupon Nebuchadnezzar, with a few followers, made haste to Babylon, where he took possession of the whole empire; which then contained Chaldaea, Assyria, Arabia, Syria and Palestine; over which he reigned forty-three years. In the seventh year of Jehoiakim, which was the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, according to the Babylonish account, and the fourth, according to the Jewish, Daniel revealed to Nebuchadnezzar the dream which he had forgot, and also interpreted it concerning the four monarchies*, the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman: Whereupon the prophet was advanced to honour, being made chief ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief governor over the wise men; and at his request, his three companions, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, were also advanced to posts of honour. The same year Jehoiakim, after he had served the king of Babylon three years, rebelled against him†; and refusing to pay him any more tribute, renewed his confederacy with Pharaoh-necho king of Egypt. Whereupon Nebuchadnezzar sent orders to all his lieutenants and governors of provinces in those parts to make war upon him; which brought upon him invasions from every quarter, the bands of the Chaldees, Syrians, Moabites, Ammonites, and other nations subject to the Babylonish empire harassing him on every side. Thus they continued to do for three or four years together, till, in the eleventh year of his reign*, all parties joining together against him, they besieged him in Jerusalem; and having taken

him

* Canon Ptolemæi. † Dan. ii. 2 Kings xxiv. 1.—5.
 * Ant. Chr. 603. † A. M. 3351. Ant. Chr. 599.

him prisoner, 'tis like in some tally or other, they flew him with the sword, and cast out his body without one of the gates of Jerusalem, allowing it no other burial, as the prophet Jeremiah^a had foretold, than that of an ass; that is, to rot and be consumed in the open air.

This year died his confederate, Pharaoh-nerchoh king of Egypt, after he had reigned sixteen years^b; and Phamnis his son succeeded in that kingdom.

Jehoiakim being dead, Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead^c. He is also called Jeconiah, and Coniah^d. In 2 Kings xxiv. 8. 'tis said he was eighteen years old when he began to reign; but in the Chronicles 'tis only eight. Which difference may be reconciled, either, first, by granting that in his eighth year he began to reign with his father, who made him king as other kings of Israel and Judah in times of trouble, and in his eighteenth year he reigned alone; or, secondly, he is, in the Chronicles, called a son of eight years when he began to reign, because this was the year, not of his age, but of the Babylonish captivity, under which both he and his father had been just so long; for from the fourth of Jehoiakim, to the first year of Jehoiachin, are precisely eight years. Jehoiachin doing evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father had done, this drew down a declaration of God's wrath against him by the prophet Jeremiah^e. Which was executed: For after his father's death, the servants of Nebuchadnezzar, or his lieutenants and governors of provinces, continued to block up Jerusalem; and after three months, the king of Babylon himself came in person, and vigorously attacked

^a Jer. xlii. 18, 19. and xxvii. 30. ^b Herodotus, lib. 2. cap. 159, 160.
^c 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9. ^d Jer. xxii. 24, 28. ^e Jer. xxii. 24, — 30.

tacked the city. Jehoiachin finding himself unable to defend it, went out, with his mother, his princes and servants, and delivered himself to the Babylonian^a. But he obtained no other favour, than to save his life: For he was carried to Babylon in chains, where he continued shut up in prison till the death of Nebuchadnezzar, thirty-seven years after this. He is writ childless, Jer. xxxii. 30. not because he had no children, for his sons are named, 1 Chron. iii. 17. but, as the prophet expresseth it in the place cited, because *no man of his seed did prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah*: For though Salathiel his son be one of our Lord's progenitors^b, yet he seems to have lived and died in a mean condition, among the captives at Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar having made Jehoiachin prisoner, soon made himself master of Jerusalem, and carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold, which Solomon king of Israel had made, in the temple of the Lord; and he carried away all the princes, with all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths, with the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers; none remained, save the poorest sort of the people. And out of the rest of the land he took seven thousand men of might, and of craftsmen and smiths one thousand, all that were strong and apt for war^c; besides three thousand and twenty-three^d, which had been carried away the year before out of the open country. With the mighty men of valour Nebuchadnezzar recruited his army, and the

^a 2 Kings xxiv. 10.—11. ^b Matthe i. 12. ^c 2 Kings xxiv. 13.—16.
^d Jer. lii. 28.

the artificers he employed in carrying on the buildings at Babylon.

In this captivity Ezekiel the prophet, the son of Buzi, of the house of Aaron, was carried to Babylon; and from this year he reckons throughout his prophecies, as Ezek. i. 2. and xl. 1. The poorer sort of the people being still left in the land, Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah, son of Josiah, and uncle of Jehoiachin, king over them, taking of him an oath of fidelity; and changing his name to Zedekiah, to signify *the justice of God*, that would be inflicted if he violated what he had sworn to observe^a. Zedekiah reigned eleven years in Jerusalem, but his ways being as evil in the sight of the Lord as any of his predecessors, this drew down the destruction of the city and temple, and other calamities with which his reign ended.

Before Nebuchadnezzar came upon the expedition last mentioned against Jerusalem, he was employed in settling a peace between the Medes and the Persians. These nations had been at war with various success, about the boundaries of their empire for five years. In the sixth they engaged in a battle, which they intended should be decisive: but while the fortune of the day seemed to hang in an equal balance, there happened an eclipse, which overspread both armies with darkness; which was foretold by Thales, the Milesian, according to Herodotus^b. The competitors being frightened, desisted from fighting; and agreed to refer the controversy to the arbitration of two neighbouring princes. The Lydians chose Sienneſis, king of Cilicia, and the Medes, Nebuchadnezzar,

^a 2 Kings xxiv. 13,—16. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10. ^b Lib. i. cap. 74.

nezzar, whom Herodotus^f calls Labynetus, tyrant of Babylon; who made up a peace on terms that Astyages, son of Cyaxares, king of Media, should take to wife Ariana, the daughter of Halyates, king of the Lydians. Of which marriage, within a year, was born Cyaxares, called, in the Book of Daniel, Darius the Median. About the same time Astyages gave his daughter Mandana, by a former wife, in marriage to Cambyse the Persian, of whom, next year, being the last of Jeholakin, was born Cyrus, the founder of the Persian monarchy, whose life and actions we shall hear of afterwards. Zedekiah being settled on the throne at Jerusalem, Jeremiah had in a vision shown unto him the restoration, which God would give to them that were carried into captivity, with the misery and desolation that would befall them and their king, who were still in the land, under the type of two baskets of figs. The same year God foretold to Jeremiah, *xxix.* 34.—39. the confusion that he would bring upon Elam, or Persia, a kingdom lying eastward beyond the river Tigris, and the restoration he would give thereto. All which came to pass; for this country was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar; but afterwards joining with Cyrus, it helped to subdue the Babylonians; and Shushan, the chief city of that province, became the^u metropolis of the Persian empire. After the departure of Nebuchadnezzar out of Judea, Zedekiah having settled himself in the kingdom, the kings of the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Zidonians, Tyrians, and others, sent to congratulate him upon his advancement, and to propose to him a league against the king of Babylon. Whereup-

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^f Lib. 1. cap. 74.ⁱ Jer xxiv.^u Strabo, lib. 15. p. 727.

on Jeremiah, by the command of God, made him yokes and bands, and sent them by these messengers to the Jews, saying, 'In this manner saith the Lord God, who hath given all these countries to the king of Babylon; that they should serve him and his son, and his son's son. If they obeyed him it should be well with them, and with their land; but if otherwise, they should be consumed and destroyed. He spake to Zedekiah after the same manner, which had that influence upon him, that he did not then join in that league: but when it was afterwards strengthened by the accession of the Egyptians and other nations, he joined in the confederacy, to the ruin of himself and of his country.

Zedekiah, about the second year of his reign, sent Elafah, the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah, the son of Hilkiah, to Babylon, on an embassy to Nebuchadnezzar*. By them Jeremiah the prophet wrote a letter to the Jews who had been carried captives, warning them not to be deceived by the false prophets, as if their captivity were to be but for a short time; for it was to continue seventy years: and therefore they ought to build houses, and provide for themselves in the country whither they were carried, and seek the peace thereof: for these who remained in Judah and Jerusalem should be so far from being able to effectuate any restoration, that themselves would be consumed by sword, famine, and pestilence, and the rest scattered over the face of the earth, as a reproach among the nations*. And as to their false prophets, he denounced a fearful destruction against them; which was all accomplished; for

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* Jer. xxv. 3.—17.

* Jer. xxix. 10.

* A. M. 3353. Ant. C. 5974.

Nebuchadnezzar, finding that they had disturbed the people by their vain predictions, hindering them to make settlements in the places where he had planted them; caused their prophets to be seized and roasted in the fire. These letters being read to the Jews of the captivity, had good effects upon some, but not upon the greater part: For Shemaiah, the Nehelamite, wrote to Jerusalem; complaining of Jeremiah; which being signified to the prophet, he denounced a severe punishment upon Shemaiah for the same.

In the fourth year of Zedekiah¹, and fifth month, Hananiah, the son of Azur, of Gibeon², prophesied falsely in the name of the Lord, that within two full years, all the vessels of the Lord, with Jeconiah; and all the captives, should be returned to Jerusalem. Whereon Jeremiah, by commission from the Lord, told that God had not sent Hananiah to speak so; but that false teacher made the people trust a lie; and therefore he should be smitten and die. And accordingly he died in the seventh month of that year, two months after his prediction. The same year Jeremiah had revealed to him the prophecies which we have in the fifty and fifty first chapters of his book concerning the judgments of God, which were to be inflicted upon Chaldaea and Babylon, by the Medes and Persians; which Jeremiah wrote in a book, and delivered it to Seraiah, the son of Neriah³, the brother of Baruch, who was then sent to Babylon; commanding him, when he should come thither; he should read the same, and bind a stone to it; and cast it into the midst of the river, to signify, that

¹ A. M. 3335. Ant. C. 595.

² Jer. xxviii.

³ Jer. li 59.—64.

that so should Babylon sink, and never rise any more; which hath been since fully verified: For 'tis now about two thousand years since Babylon hath been wholly desolate, as shall be afterwards observed.

The book of Baruch is pretended by some^b to have been writ at this time; though, if that apocryphal book consist with itself, it appears from Baruch i. 2. *In the fifth year, the 7th day of the month, at that time when the Chaldeans took Jerusalem and burnt it with fire;* that the book must be writ after the burning of Jerusalem, which was in the eleventh year of Zedekiah. Jerom rejects it wholly, and calls it *Judaypapeer*, a false feigned writing of some Hellenistical Jew: And indeed there are just reasons to reject it, not only because the church of the Jews never received it, nor is it writ in Hebrew, but also because, in Baruch i. 10. the captives are said to send money to Jerusalem to buy burnt-offerings and oblations, to be offered at the altar of the Lord, when there was at that time neither temple nor altar at Jerusalem; all these sacred things being then burnt to ashes by the Babylonians. In Baruch i. 11, 12. Balthasar is said to be the son of Nebuchadnezzar, whereas he was certainly his grandson. And, in Baruch iii. 4. he desires God may hear the prayers of the dead in Israel; which is superstitious, and contrary to the stile of the sacred scriptures.

In the fifth year of Zedekiah^a, which was the fifth of Jehoiachin's captivity, and the thirtieth from the great reformation made in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, Ezekiel was called of God to

VOL. II.

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^a Pridcaux's Connection, part I, p. 72. ^b Hieronymus in præfatione ad Jeremiam. ^c Ant. C. 394.

be a prophet among the captives by the river Chebar^d. The same year he had a vision of the cherubims and the wheels, declaring the mystery of providence, with other instructions and revelations, from the first to the end of the seventh chapter of his book. In the sixth year he was carried in a vision to Jerusalem, and there saw the several sorts of idolatry practised by the Jews, with the judgments God would inflict upon them for these abominations, as recorded from the eighth to the twelfth chapter. But at the same time God promised to the captives who mourned for these abominations, and kept themselves faithful to God's service, *That he would be a sanctuary to them in a strange land, and bring them back again to the inheritance of Israel*^e. And all these things he spoke to them of the captivity.

About the same time died Cyaxares, king of Media^f, after he had reigned forty years, and was succeeded by Astyages his son. Also Psammis, king of Egypt, having reigned six years, died in an expedition he made against the Ethiopians^g; and Apries his son, who, in sacred scripture, is called Pharaoh-hophra, succeeded him, and reigned twenty-five years.

In the 7th year of Zedekiah^h, God did, both by types and words of revelation, shew unto Ezekiel the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, the flight of Zedekiah by night, the putting out of his eyes and his imprisonment and death at Babylon, with many calamities that should be inflicted on the Jews for their iniquities; which is the subject of

^d Ezek. i. 1.—3.

^e Ezek. ix. 4. xi. 15.—25.

^f Herodot. lib. i.

cap. 100.

^g Idem, lib. 4. cap. 161.

^h A. M. 3338. Ant. C. 591.

the twelfth chapter of his book; and what is contained in the seven following chapters, revealed to him the same year, relates to the same affairs. Daniel at this time became so eminent in righteousness, piety, and holiness of life, that he is, by God himself, in Ezek. xiv. 19, 20, equalled with Noah and Job, for having great interest in heaven by his prayers for others; and yet, if we reckon him, at the time of his captivity, a youth of eighteen years of age, he will now be but thirty-four at the utmost: But he employed the vigour of his age in the service of God.

Zedekiah having, in the seventh year of his reign, sent ambassadors to make a confederacy with Pharaohshophra, king of Egypt, whereby he broke the oath of fidelity he had sworn to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and rebelled against him^b, which drew on him a war, that ended in his ruin and that of his country^c. For, in the ninth year of Zedekiah^d, Nebuchadnezzar, with a great army, marched against him; but on his coming into Syria, finding the Ammonites had entered into the same league with Egypt, he was in doubt which of them first to attack, the Ammonites or the Jews. Whereupon he committed the decision of this question to the diviners, who, upon using their heathenish arts, of consulting with the entrails of their sacrifices, their teraphim and their arrows^e, determined for carrying on the war against the Jews. Therefore the Babylonian monarch marched straight into Judea, and in a few days took all the cities of that country, except Lachish, Azekah, and Jerusalem^f. The Jews in those

^a Ant. C. 590.

^b Ezek. xvii. 15.

^c 2 Kings xxv. 1. Jer. xxxix. 1. lli. 4.

^d Ezek. xxi. 19, — 24.

^e Jer. xxxiv. 1.

those places, and particularly at Jerusalem, under the terrible apprehensions of a siege, to make some shew of reformation, resolved that every man should let his man or his maid-servant, being an Hebrew or Hebrewess, go free^m: For it seems they had detained them, without their consent, in servitude, beyond the seventh, or sabbatic year, contrary to the lawⁿ. In the tenth day of the tenth month of this year, about the end of our December, Nebuchadnezzar laid close siege to Jerusalem^o; in memory whereof that day is kept by the Jews for a fast^p, even to this time. The same day this was revealed to Ezekiel in Chaldeæ, under the type of a boiling pot; and that night his wife died; and the prophet was forbid to make any mourning for her, to shew that the loss of the holy city should be dearer than the death of any relation^q.

In the beginning of the tenth year of Zedekiah^r, Jeremiah declared to this prince by commission from the Lord, that the Babylonians would certainly take the city, burn it with fire, make him prisoner, and carry him to Babylon, where he should die^s. Wherefore Zedekiah put the prophet in prison^t; yet in this very year, he purchased of Hanameel, his uncle's son, a field in Anathoth, to shew, that though Judah and Jerusalem should be laid desolate, yet there should be a restoration, when lands and possessions should be again enjoyed by the legal owners, as in former times. In the interim, Pharaoh-hophra coming out of Egypt with a great army to relieve Zedekiah, Nebuchad-

^m Jer. xxxiv. 8,—10. ⁿ Deut. xv. 12. ^o 2 Kings xxv. 1. ^p Zech. viii. 19. ^q Ezek. xxiv. 1,—18. ^r Jer. xxxiv. 1,—4. ^s Jer. xxxii. 1,—17. ^t Jer. xxxiv. 1,—4.

nezzar raised the siege of Jerusalem, to march against him¹; but before he went, he sent to Babylon all the Jews he had then in his camp, to the number of eight hundred and thirty-two persons². Jeremiah being again set at liberty, Zedekiah sent to enquire what should be the event of the war; and to desire him to pray for him and the people. The prophet answered, the Egyptians upon whom the Jews depended would certainly deceive them: Their army would return into Egypt; and then the Chaldeans would renew the siege, take the city, and burn it with fire³. But it being the general opinion of the Jews, that the Chaldeans would not renew the war against them, every man brought his man and maid-servant again into subjection, contrary to the engagement for reformation before made. Wherefore Jeremiah proclaimed liberty to the sword, famine and pestilence, to execute God's wrath upon them⁴. While the Chaldeans were absent from Jerusalem, Jeremiah intending to retire to Anathoth, the place of his nativity, to avoid the siege, which he knew would be renewed, put himself on his journey: But while he was passing the gate of the city, the captain of the guard seized him, as a deserter falling off to the Chaldeans; whereon he was put in prison in a dungeon, in the house of Jonathan the scribe, where he remained many days⁵. On the approach of the Chaldean army, the Egyptians thought not fit to stand it; but retired again to their own country, as had been foretold⁶, leaving Zedekiah and the Jews to perish in that war they had drawn them into. Where-

upon

¹ Jer. xxxvii. 5. ² Jer. lli. 29. ³ Jer. xxxvii. 3, — 10 ⁴ Jer. xxxiv. 11, — 17, — 22. ⁵ Jer. xxxvii. 15, — 15. ⁶ Jer. xxxvii. 7.

upon the prophet Ezekiel reproached the Egyptians for being a *staff of reed* to those they had made to lean on them; and denounced the judgments of God against them; which were executed in the war and desolation for forty years ensuing; and foretold, that they should become a mean and base people, having no more a king of their own to reign over them^b. All which came to pass; for at the end of forty years, Egypt was made a province of the Persian empire; and hath been governed by strangers ever since, being subject in several ages to the Macedonians, Romans, Saracens, Mamalukes; and at this day to the Turkish empire.

Upon the retreat of the Egyptians, Nebuchadnezzar returned, and renewed the siege of Jerusalem. Whereupon Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah out of prison^c to enquire of him what word there was from God concerning the present posture of affairs. To which there was no other answer, but that Zedekiah was to be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon. Yet the king was prevailed upon not to send the prophet back to the prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe, a most noisome place; but he was allowed to be a prisoner in the king's court, with an allowance of a portion of bread out of the common store, till the city was taken. Zedekiah further sent messengers to Jeremiah, to enquire of the Lord concerning the present war. To which he answered, God would fight against the city, and smite it; both king and people should be delivered into the hands of the Babylonian; those who continued

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^b Ezek. xxix. xxx.^c Jer. xxxvii. 17.

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in the city during the siege, should perish by the sword, famine and pestilence; but those who would go out, and submit to the Chaldeans, should have their lives for a prey^d. At which answer the princes about the king were offended, and desired that Jeremiah should be put to death, because he weakened the hands of the men of war, and sought not the welfare of the people, but their hurt. Wherefore he was delivered into their hands; and they threw him into a filthy dungeon, where he sunk in the mire. But Ebedmelech the Ethiopian intreated the king, and the prophet was pulled out of the dungeon by cords, made soft under his arm-pits with cast clouts and rags^e. Zedekiah once more sent for Jeremiah into the temple, and secretly enquired what he should do: And the prophet again told him, that if he would immediately deliver himself into the hands of the king of Babylon's princes, who commanded the siege, he might save himself and the city; and seriously advised him to do it. But Zedekiah would not hearken to him, but sent him back to prison, and after that appears no more to have consulted with him.

In the eleventh year of Zedekiah^f, God declared his judgments against Tyre, for their insulting the calamitous state of Judah and Jerusalem: They should be delivered in the hands of the same Nebuchadnezzar, as is fully described in the 26th, 27th and 28th chapters of Ezekiel; and the Egyptians should not escape his avenging hand^g. In the ninth day of the fourth month of this year, Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans^h.

Zedekiah

^d Jer. xxi. ^e Jer. xxxviii. ^f A. M. 3362. Ant. Chr. 586.
^g Ezek. xxix. ^h 2 Kings xxv. 3, 4. Jer. xxxix. 2.—10. and lii. 6.—11.

Zedekiah and his men of war broke through the camp of the enemy, endeavouring to make their escape; but being pursued, he was taken in the plains of Jericho, and carried to the king of Babylon at Riblah in Syria; who caused his sons, and his princes taken with him, to be slain before his face, commanded this unfortunate prince's eyes to be put out, and then bound him in fetters of brass, and sent him to Babylon; where he died in prison, and hereby fulfilled the prophecy of Ezekiel^a, that he should be brought to Babylon, and yet should not see it. In the seventh day of the fifth month, which is towards the end of our July, Nebuzaradan, captain of the guards to the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem; and after he had taken out all the vessels of the house of the Lord, and gathered together all the riches that could be found, either in the king's house, or in any other of the city, he did on the tenth day of the same month, at the command of his master, burn both the temple and city to the ground, overthrowing all the walls, towers, and fortresses belonging thereto, till he brought the whole to a perfect desolation; and so it continued for fifty-two years together, till the restoration from the captivity. In memory of this calamity, the Jews kept a fast in the fourth month, which falls in our June, for the taking of the city; and another fast in the fifth month, which falls in our July, for the destruction of the temple, which are mentioned Zech. viii. 19. Nebuzaradan having destroyed the city and temple, made all the people he found there captives. Of these

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^a Chap. xii. 9. 2 Kings xxv. 8.—12. Jer. lii. 12.—17.

11—12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

he took Seraiah the high-priest, who seems to have been the father of Ezra¹, and Zephaniah the second priest, and about seventy others of the principal men of the place, and carried them to Riblah, to Nebuchadnezzar; who caused them all to be put to death. Of the rest of the people, he left the poorer sort to dress the ground and the vineyards, and made Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, governor over them; and carried away others to Babylon. But as to the prophet Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar gave particular charge to Nebuzaradan to look well to him, and do him no harm². Therefore so soon as this officer came to Jerusalem, he took the prophet out of prison; and having carried him as far as Ramah, he there gave him his choice, whether he would go with him to Babylon, where he should be well looked to, and maintained at the king's charge; or remain in the land: And the prophet having chosen the latter, Nebuzaradan gave him victuals and a reward, and sent him back to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, with a special charge to be kind to him.

Here Dr. Lightfoot³ doth place the book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Every day from the fourth of Jehoiakim to this time, which was eighteen years, might give occasion for such doleful songs: The book in the Hebrew hath no title, but is named, as the books of Moses, from the first word, *Ecan, How?* But the Jewish commentators give it a title from the subject, *Dinorah, Lamentations*; and so do the Greek, and most other translators. We have therein expressions of sorrow for the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem.

VOL. II. S f Though

¹ Ezra vii. 1. ² Jer. xxxix. 11.—14. and xl. 1.—6. ³ *Chronica temporum & Ordo textuum*, p. m. 127.

Though Jeremiah foretold it, yet he was sincere when he protested he *did not desire that woful day*; but in the prospect thereof, wished *his head were waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears*, to lament it. The composition is not only poetical, but alphabetical, each verse beginning with a several letter of the Hebrew alphabet, in the first, second and fourth chapters; and in the third chapter the first three verses begin with Aleph, the next three with Beth, and so forward, as a help to the memory, the like being used in some of David's Psalms. The whole book is of great use, to furnish the pious Jews in their sufferings with spiritual language to express their grief, to preserve the remembrance of Zion among their children in Babylon, who had never seen it; to direct their tears in the right channel, to mourn for sin, to pour out their heart to God; and to encourage their hopes that God would yet return and have mercy upon them: And may be of use to us, to affect us with godly sorrow for the calamities of the church and people of God, as becomes those who are living members of the same mystical body.

Nebuchadnezzar being returned to Babylon, those Jews, who for fear of the Chaldeans, had hid themselves among nations adjacent, or in caves, field and deserts, hearing that Gedaliah was made governor of the land, resorted to him; and he having sworn to protect them, they settled again in Judea, and gathered the fruits thereof. But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah came to him on a treacherous design: For he being of the seed-royal, reckoned to make himself king of the land; and to accomplish this, he formed a plot to kill Gedaliah,

Gedaliah, and seize the government, Baalis king of the Ammonites being confederate with him. Johanan the son of Kareah having notice of the conspiracy, went and told Gedaliah, offering to kill Ishmael, and so to deliver the governor from the mischief intended. Gedaliah being of a kind disposition, could not believe so bad a thing, but still carried on a friendly correspondence with his adversary. Of which Ishmael taking the advantage, in the seventh month, which answers to our September, when most of the people were scattered to gather the fruits of the land, killed Gedaliah, and other Jews and Chaldeans with him, as they were eating and drinking together at Mizpeh. Next day, hearing of eighty men who were going with offerings and incense to the place where the temple had been, he slew them also, and threw their dead bodies into a pit; excepting ten of them, who promised him their stores in the field for the redemption of their lives. Johanan the son of Kareah, and the rest of the captains who were with him, hearing of this wicked fact, armed immediately as many of the people as they could get together, and pursued after Ishmael; and having overtaken him at Gibeon, retook all the captives, among whom were the daughters of king Zedekiah. But Ishmael himself, with eight of his men, escaped to the Ammonites. This murder of Gedaliah happened two months after the destruction of the city and temple; for which the Jews observed a fast in the seventh month, because it completed their ruin. After this, Johanan the son of Kareah, and the rest of the officers and people

* Jer. xl. 7, 8-10.

° Jer. xli.

P Zech. viii. 19.

people who were with him, feared the king of Babylon would take vengeance on the poor remnant of Judea for the murder of Gedaliah, whom he had made governor of the land, retired to Mizpeh, to flee into Egypt; and came to Beth-lehem, in their way thither; where they consulted the prophet Jeremiah, whom they carried with them, desiring him to enquire of God concerning their intended journey*: Who having considered the matter ten days, told them as an answer from the Lord, That if they should tarry in the land, all should go well with them, God would shew them mercy; but if they would disobey the word of the Lord, and go into Egypt, then the sword and famine would follow them thither, and they should there be destroyed. All this could not persuade them: They said, this answer was suggested by Baruch the son of Neriah; and in prosecution of their design, they took all the remainder of the people which Nebuzaradan had left under the government of Gedaliah, men, women and children, with Jeremiah and Baruch, and settled in Egypt†; till all those judgments God had threatened for their disobedience there overtook them, to their utter destruction.

The Jews, who went into Egypt, having settled at Migdol, at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros‡, that is, at Magdalen, near the Red Sea, at Daphne, near Pelusium, and at Menphis in the country of Thebais§, gave themselves wholly up to idolatry, worshipping the queen of heaven, and other heathenish idols. The prophet Jeremiah complained aloud of this impiety; but

* Jer. xlii. † Jer. xliii. ‡ Jer. xlii. § Vide Bocharti Phaleg. lib. 4. cap. 27.

but this had no other effect than to draw from them an express declaration that they would continue in their idolatry *: Wherefore the prophet denounced destruction against them by the sword and by the famine, whereby all the Jews dwelling in Egypt would be consumed, except a few that should escape to the land of Judah: And as a sign thereof it was foretold by the same prophet, that Pharaoh-hophra, in whom they trusted, should be given into the hands of his enemies that sought his life, as Zedekiah king of Judah was given into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar; which came to pass about eighteen years afterwards. There is no more account of Jeremiah after this; it is probable that he died in Egypt about this time, being then advanced in age, having prophesied forty-one years, from the thirteenth of Josiah, to the year after the destruction of the temple, and being much broken with the calamities that he and his country had endured. What some of the ancients have said of his being stoned to death by the Jews, for his warnings against their idolatry, or of his being put to death for his warnings against Pharaoh-hophra, are but mere conjectures.

The captivity being completed, all the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel relating thereto, were fulfilled; particularly that of Ezekiel, wherein God's forbearance to the house of Israel, is limited to three hundred and ninety days, and his forbearance to the house of Judah to 40 days; a day being there put for a year. For from the idolatry of Jeroboam in the first year of his reign, to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, are just

* Ant. Chr. 587, Reg. Neb. 18.

† Ezek. iv. 5, 6.

just so many years; for if 395 be taken from the year of the world 3362, in which this captivity happened, we will run back to the year 2972, in which Jeroboam^a made apostasy, and set up the calves at Dan and Bethel; and from the thirteenth year of Josiah, in which Jeremiah began to prophesy^y, and to complain of the sin of Judah, they being weary of that good king's reformation, to this captivity, are just forty years; so that the event exactly agrees to the prediction in all points. I know some learned men give a different beginning and ending to these prophetic years; but since what I have offered, makes the prophecy to be so punctually accomplished, and agrees with the opinion of the greater number of authors I have seen on the subject, I insist no further upon it.

Nebuchadnezzar being returned to Babylon after the end of the Jewish war, out of the spoils he had taken in that expedition, made that golden image to the honour of Bel his god, which he set up and dedicated in the plain of Dura^z. The image was sixty cubits high, and six cubits broad. Diodorus Siculus^x speaks of an image of Jupiter at Babylon, of forty feet in length; and a thousand talents in weight, standing upright on his feet; which may be the same with that in Daniel; for though sixty cubits make ninety feet, yet if we suppose the idol stood on a pedestal fifty feet high, the whole height would be ninety feet, and the golden idol only forty feet: And ninety feet in height, and six cubits in breadth, would never make the figure proportionable to the stature of a
man.

^x See page 184, and 313.

^a Lib. 2, cap. 9.

^y Jer. i. 2.

^z Dan. iii.

man. Besides, a thousand Babylonish talents, computed at eight hundred and seventy-five ounces each talent^b, will amount to three millions and a half Sterling money; but if we advance the height of the golden statue to be ninety feet, without the pedestal, the sum will be incredible. Nebuchadnezzar having summoned all his princes, counselors, captains and other officers, to adore this image, and to be present at the dedication thereof, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, three captive Jews preferred to posts of honour in Babylon, were informed against, for refusing to worship the image. They being called for, and with a holy boldness refusing to be guilty of such idolatry, they were thrown into a burning fiery furnace, in which they were wonderfully preserved free of any hurt by the power of God: *For by faith they quenched the violence of fire^c.* The king being convinced of the truth of the miracle, called them out of the furnace, gave honour to the true God, and promoted those faithful worthies in the province of Babylon. Daniel, who was so eminently faithful to God, would never have complied more than those three; but he seems at this time not to have been accused.

Nebuchadnezzar, in the twenty-first year of his reign, according to the Jewish account, which was the nineteenth with the Babylonians, and the second after the destruction of Jerusalem^d, came again into Syria; where he laid siege to Tyre, of which Ithobaal was then king^e; and it cost him hard work for thirteen years together, before he

^b See Prideaux's Connection, part i. p. m. 101. ^c Heb. xi. 34.

^d A. M. 3364. Ant. Chr. 585. Reg. Neb. 19.

^e Joseph. Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 11. p. 350.

could be master of it : For it was a strong, wealthy city, of great fame in those times for traffic and merchandize, whereby several of its inhabitants had made themselves great as princes, for riches and splendour*. While he lay at this siege, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, being sent out with a part of the royal army, invaded the land of Israel †, (probably to revenge the death of Gedaliah) and seized all the Jews he could meet with, who amounted to no more than seven hundred and forty-five persons †; by which the desolation of the land appears to have been very great, and this completed it. By the by, we may observe, that there are some things in the last chapter of Jeremiah, particularly from the 29th to the 34th verse, that seem not to have been writ by the prophet himself, because the facts there related were done after his death; but they might have been added by Ezra, or some inspired writer, to keep those remarkable events in perpetual remembrance. After this Nebuzaradan marched against the Ammonites, and having destroyed Rabbah their royal city, and made great desolation in their country; he carried their king, their princes, and the chief of their land into captivity, as foretold, Jer. xlix. 1,—6. Ezek. xxv. 1,—7. And this was done by way of just revenge, for the part they had acted in the murder of Gedaliah, governor of Israel. Also during the siege of Tyre, the other neighbouring nations; that is, the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites and Zidonians, seem to have been harassed and broken by the excursions of the Babylonish army; whereby the judgments were executed upon them, that

† Ant. Chr. 584. Reg. Neb. 21.

* Isa. xxiii. 8. Ezek. xxvi, xxvii.

† Jer. lii. 30.

that are denounced in the xlviiith, xlvth, and xlixth chapters of Jeremiah, and in the xxvth chapter of Ezekiel.

In the fourteenth year after the destruction of Jerusalem^{*}, which was the twenty-fifth of the captivity of Jehoiachin, were revealed unto the prophet Ezekiel all those visions and prophecies, concerning the future state of the church of God, and other gospel mysteries, which we have from the fortieth chapter to the end of his book.

The same year, the judgments that God had denounced by his prophets against Pharaoh-hophrah, or Apries, king of Egypt, began to have their accomplishment. For the Cyrenians, a colony of the Greeks that had settled in Africa, having taken from the Libyans a great part of their land, the Libyans made a surrender of themselves and their country into the hands of Apries for his protection. Whereupon Apries sent a great army into Libya, to make war against the Cyrenians[†]: Which being overthrown in battle, were all cut to pieces. The Egyptians being of opinion that Apries had lost these men of design, became so incensed that they revolted from him. Apries being informed, sent Amasis to appease the revolters. But while he was speaking to them, they declared him their king; which increased the party. At which Apries, being highly provoked, sent Paterbemis, another officer in his court, to bring Amasis to him: Which he not being able to accomplish, on his return had his ears and nose cut off. This injury, done to a man of great worth, so incensed the rest of the Egyptians, that they almost

^{*} A. M. 3376. Ant. Chr. 574. Reg. Neb. 31.
[†] Herodot. lib. 2. cap. 161, 162. Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1. cap. 68.

all joined the revoltors. Whereupon Apries was forced to flee into Upper Egypt; where he maintained himself for some years, while Amasis held all the rest of his dominions.

While this was a-doing in Egypt, in the twenty-sixth year of the captivity of Jeholachin, which was the fifteenth after the destruction of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar made himself master of Tyre, after a siege of thirteen years^a, and utterly destroyed the place^b, that is, the city on the continent, the ruins whereof were afterwards called Palæ-Tyrus, or Old Tyre: For Nebuchadnezzar made a fort against it, cast up a mount, and erected engines to batter down its walls^c; which could not be said of Tyre in the sea. But before he took the city, the inhabitants had removed most of their effects into an island about half a mile from the shore, and there built a new city. Therefore the king of Babylon, when he entered the town he had so long besieged, found no spoils there to reward his soldiers; which made him let his anger fly, by razing the whole buildings to the ground, and killing all the inhabitants that he found there. And his army having served so long in the siege, *without wages, till every head was bald, and every shoulder peeled*, God, by the prophet Ezekiel^d, promised to him the spoils of Egypt. Accordingly, the same year, Nebuchadnezzar taking the occasion of the intestine divisions in that country by the revolt of Amasis, over-run the whole land, from Migdol to Syene; that is, from the one end of Egypt to the other; reducing the country to such

^a Joseph. Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 11.

^b A. M. 3377. Ant. Chr. 573. Reg. Neb. 32.

^c Ezek. xxvi. 4.—16. and xxviii. 8.—10.

xxx. 5.—19.

^d Ezek. xxix. 18.—20.

such a desolation, as it did not recover in forty years thereafter^l: And having come to terms with Amasis, he confirmed him as his deputy in the kingdom, and returned to Babylon. During this ravage of the land of Egypt, most of the Jews who had fled thither after the murder of Gedaliah, fell into the hands of the Babylonians. Many of them they slew, others they carried captive to Babylon; scarce any escaped, but such as fled out of Egypt, and afterwards settled themselves in their own land at the end of the captivity, as had been foretold by Jeremiah^m.

Nebuchadnezzar being gone out of Egypt, Apries creeping out of his hiding-places, got towards the sea-coasts; where he hired an army of Carians, Ionians and other foreigners, and marched against Amasisⁿ, and gave him battle near Memphis^{*}; where Apries being vanquished, and taken prisoner, he was carried to the city Sais, and there strangled in his own palace. Hereby was accomplished the prediction of Jeremiah^o, *Behold, I will give Pharaoh-hophra king of Egypt into the hands of his enemies, who seek his life, as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar his enemy, that sought his life.* It is remarked of him by Herodote^p, that he used to boast that it was not in the power of God himself to dispossess him of his kingdom; which is like his pride spoke of in Ezek. xxix. 9. *The river is mine, and I have made it*: Yet he was thus tumbled down. For the first twenty years of his reign, he enjoyed a very prosperous fortune, having many successes against the

^l Ezek. xlix. 13.
cap. 163. 169.

^m Chap. xlii. 27, 28.
^o Chap. xlii. 30.

ⁿ Herodotus, lib. 2.
^p Lib. 2. cap. 169.

^{*} A. M. 3380. Ant. Chr. 570. Reg. Neb. 35.

the Sidonians, Tyrians^a, and other nations: But when he turned a tyrant, he made a miserable exit. After the death of Apries, Amasis became possessed of the whole kingdom of Egypt, and held it forty-four year^t.

Nebuchadnezzar being returned from Egypt to Babylon, had there the dream of a wonderful great tree, and the cutting down thereof: Which vision, with its interpretation, is fully recorded in the fourth chapter of Daniel. This king being now at rest from all his wars, applied himself to finish his buildings at Babylon. Semiramis is said by some^s, and Belus by others^u, to have founded this city: But whoever laid the foundation of it, Nebuchadnezzar made it great, and one of the wonders of the world. It was remarkable, first, for its walls, which were prodigious; for Herodotus^v tells us, they were in thickness eighty-seven feet, in height three hundred and fifty feet, and in compass four hundred and eighty furlongs, (which make sixty of our miles) in the form of a square, each side being fifteen miles in length, all built of large bricks, cemented with bitumen. On every side there were twenty-five gates of brass, that is, one hundred in all. Hence it is promised to Cyrus, That God would break before him the gates of brass^w. The walls were adorned with two hundred and fifty towers. From the twenty-five gates went twenty-five streets, in straight lines, to the opposite gates, crossing each other at right angles, and cutting the whole city into six hundred and seventy-six squares. The country round was most fertile, to maintain

^a Herodotus, lib. 2. cap. 161. ^t Herodotus, lib. 3. cap. 10. ^s Justin, lib. 1. cap. 2. ^u Q. Curtius, lib. 5. cap. 1. ^v Herodotus, lib. 1. cap. 178, & seqq. ^w Isa. xlv. 2.

maintain so great a city; but it was never fully inhabited. A second great work, was the temple of Belus; where was a tower of a furlong on each side, that is half a mile in the whole compass; and consisted of eight towers^a, one built over the other, like so many storeys one above another, each storey being seventy-five feet high; which makes the perpendicular height of the whole tower to have been six hundred feet. Therefore it is not without reason that Monsieur Bochart^b affirms it to have been the same that was built after the confusion of languages. Over the top of the tower was an observatory; by the benefit of which the Chaldeans advanced their skill in astronomy above all other nations: For when Alexander the Great took Babylon, Calisthenes the philosopher found they had astronomical observations for a thousand, nine hundred and three years before that time. Nebuchadnezzar enlarged this temple, by vast buildings round it, of a mile in circumference, with several gates of solid brass leading into the temple; wherein he put all the sacred vessels which he carried from Jerusalem^c; and therein were also several statues of massy gold. There seems to have been the golden image described in the third chapter of Daniel, which hath been before^d noticed, with other images and sacred utensils of solid gold; containing, as Diodorus Siculus^e mentions them, five thousand and thirty talents; which, with the great image, amount, according to Dr. Prideaux^f, to above twenty-one millions Sterling; and we may suppose

^a Herodotus, lib. 1. cap. 181. Strabo, lib. 16. p. 738. ^b Phaleg. lib. 1. cap. 9. in fine. ^c Dan. i. 2. ^d See p. 321. ^e Lib. 2. cap. 9. ^f Connection, part 1. p. 101.

pose the treasure and utensils much more, being a collection of near two thousand years. All this Xerxes took away, when in the return from his Grecian expedition he plundered this temple of its immense riches, and laid it in rubbish, so as it was never repaired, as shall be afterwards observed. Near this temple stood the old palace of the kings of Babylon, being four miles in compass. Over against it, on the other side of the river, was the the new palace^c; which Nebuchadnezzar built, being eight miles in circuit, surrounded with three walls, one within another, and strongly fortified, according to the way of those times. There were also hanging gardens, so famous among ancient authors^d. They contained a square of four *plethra*, or four hundred feet, on every side; and were carried up aloft into the air, in the manner of several large terraces, one above another, till the highest equalled the walls of the city. The ascent was by stairs, ten feet wide from terrace to terrace: And the whole pile was sustained by vast arches, one above another, strengthened by a wall of twenty-two feet thickness. On the top of the arches were laid large flat stones; over these, a layer of reed, mixed with bitumen; over these, two rows of bricks, well cemented; over all, thick sheets of lead; and, lastly, the mould of the garden so deep, as trees, plants and flowers had room to take root. The whole was watered with an engine, out of the river. And this work of vanity was done to gratify Queen Amytis; who having been educated in the woody country of Media,

^a Diodorus Siculus, lib. 2. cap. 8. ^b Strabo, lib. 16. p. 739. ^c Diodorus Siculus, lib. 2. cap. 16. ^d Quint. Curtius, lib. 5. cap. 5.

Media^a, desired to see something like it at Babylon. There were other works of great expence done in this city; as, a curious bridge over a branch of the river Euphrates, running through the town from north to south. The bridge was of a furlong, or the eighth part of a mile, in length, and thirty feet in breadth, framed with wonderful art, to supply the want of a foundation at the bottom of the river, which was all sandy. The artificial canals, the banks of the river, and the artificial lake made for draining in the times of the overflows, and an obelisk, of a hundred and thirty-five feet in length, and twenty-five feet in breadth and thickness, were all prodigious works^b. But to go on with the history:

At the end of twelve months^c, after Nebuchadnezzar's last dream, while he was walking in his palace, at Babylon, and probably in the uppermost terrais of his hanging gardens, from whence he might have a prospect of the whole city, he proudly boasting of the works he had done, said, *Is not this great Babylon which I have built, for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?* But while the words were yet in his mouth, there came a voice from heaven to rebuke his pride; which told him, that his kingdom was departed from him; that he should be driven from the society of men, and for seven years have his dwelling with the wild beasts of the field. And immediately his senses being taken from him^d, he fell into a distracted condition, in

^a Berosus apud Joseph. contra Apionem, lib. 3. p. 1045. ^b Diodorus Siculus, lib. 2. cap. 8, 11. Joseph. Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 11. Herodotus, lib. 2. cap. 185, 186.

^c Ant. Chr. 569. Reg. Neb. 36. Dan. iv. 29, 30.

^d A. M. 3387. Ant. Chr. 563. Reg. Neb. 42.

which he continued for seven years, living in the fields, and eating grass like oxen, till his hair was grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds claws. At the end of the seven years, his understanding returning to him, he was restored to his kingdom, and to his former honour. Whereon, being fully sensible of the almighty power of the God of heaven and earth, he praised him, *whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and these that walk in pride he is able to abase* *. After this he lived only one year and died, having reigned, from the death of his father, according to the Babylonish account, forty-three years; but by the Jewish computation, from his first coming into Palestine, forty-five years, and was one of the greatest princes that had reigned in the east for many ages before *.

Upon the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach his son succeeded him in the Babylonish empire. So soon as he was settled on the throne †, he released Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison ‡, and promoted him to great honour in the palace, admitting him to eat bread continually at his table, and setting him before the other kings and great men of the empire; and also gave him a daily allowance for his support, with an equipage and all things suitable thereto. Jerom ^m tells us, from an ancient tradition or fable among the Jews, that Evil-merodach having had the government of the Babylonish empire during his father's distraction, administered it so ill, that so soon as the old king came to himself, he put him in prison in the same place with Jehoiachin, who had been prisoner

* Dan. iv. 37.—37.

† Ant. Chr. 562. Reg. Neb. 43. ‡ Ant. Chr. 561. Evil-mer. 1.

§ 2 Kings xxv. 27.—30. Jer. lili. 31.—34. ^m Hieronymus in Isa. xiv. 19. tom. 5. fol. 26.

prisoner thirty-seven years, where he contracted such friendship with him, as was the cause of the great kindness he afterwards shewed him. The only thing that makes this story probable, is, that since Evil-merodach carried so ill after his father's death, 'tis like he behaved no better before; for he was a very profligate and vicious prince^a; for which reason he is named Evil-merodach, that is, the foolish Merodach. The same year Croesus succeeded his father Alyattes in the kingdom of Lydia^b, and reigned there fourteen years; and this year was the 23th after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the 46th of the seventy years captivity.

Evil-merodach, who, in the canon of Ptolemy is called Ilmarodamus, having reigned two years at Babylon, his lusts and cruelty made him so intolerable, that his own relations conspired and put him to death, and Neriglissar, or Nericassolassar^c, the chief conspirator, his sister's husband, reigned in his stead. It seems that Jeholachin did not out-live Evil-merodach; for 'tis said, *he did eat before him all the days of his life*^d. Hence some infer, That as a favourite he was slain with him, which agrees with the prediction in Jeremiah xxii. 30. *He shall not prosper in his day*. Upon the death of Jeholachin, Salthiel his son became the nominal prince of the Jews^e, or head of the captivity at Babylon.

The same year that Evil-merodach was slain, died Astyages king of Media^f; and to him succeeded his son Cyaxares II. in the government of the

VOL. II. U u the

^a Philostratus apud Josephum contra Apollonem, lib. 1. p. 1045. ^b Herodotus, lib. 1. cap. 6. ^c Canon Ptolemæi. ^d 2 Kings xiv. 29. ^e Euseb. Apocryphus lib. 4. cap. v. 18. ^f A. M. 3391. Ant. Chr. 555. Nericlissar, 1.

the kingdom, and Cyrus his grandson, by his daughter Mandana, was set at the head of the military affairs. Cyaxares was at this time forty-one years of age, and Cyrus forty; for Cicero says¹, That Cyrus was forty years of age when he began to reign; and lived till he was seventy. Neriglissar, on his accession to the empire at Babylon, made preparations for a war against the Medes. Cyaxares called Cyrus out of Persia to his assistance²; and on his arrival with an army of thirty thousand Persians, made him general of the Medes also, and sent him with the joint forces of both nations, to make war against the Babylonians. This Cyrus was a very extraordinary person for wisdom, valour and virtue, and famous in sacred scripture, not only as a restorer of Israel out of the Babylonish captivity³, but also in being appointed for this service by name⁴, more than a hundred years before he was born, which was an honour given to very few, except to our Saviour⁵ and to Josiah king of Judah⁶; 'tis therefore fit to take notice of a few particulars concerning him. The account Herodote gives of him, seems to be fabulous; the sum thereof is⁷, "That Astyages having married his daughter Mandana to Cambyzes king of Persia, while she was with child, he dreamed that a vine grew out of her belly, that spread itself over all Asia; which was interpreted, that the child she should bring forth would subdue the empire of the Medes. This so troubled the old king, that he resolved to destroy the child. Accordingly, when Mandana was delivered

¹ Cicero de divinatione, lib. 1. cap. 23. ² Xenophon in Cyropædia lib. 1. p. 22, 23, 38. ³ Ezra 1. ⁴ Isa. xlv. 28. Isa. xlv. 1. ⁵ Isa. vii. 14. ⁶ 2 Kings xiii. 2. ⁷ Herod. lib. 1. cap. 109, — 110.

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livered of Cyrus, he sent the infant to Harpagus his servant, with orders to kill him. He gave the child to his shepherd to execute the cruel orders. The shepherd's wife being at that time brought to bed of a dead child, she caused her dead infant to be exposed in the woods, and the king's grandchild to be educated instead of her own; which Astyages long after hearing, was so incensed, that he made Harpagus eat his own son; who, in revenge called in Cyrus, who dethroned his grandfather." This story is followed with some little alteration by Justin^b, and after them by many others, perhaps because 'tis a little amusing. Xenophon gives a quite different account in his *Cyropædia*. That book is indeed rather a model for educating a prince, to teach him true politics, and to shew what he ought to be, than a just history: Yet the learned author having lived long in the court of Cyrus the younger, who descended from this Cyrus, might there learn the true facts that are the ground-plot and foundation of his work. He observes, that Cyrus, the founder of the Persian monarchy, was the son of Mandana, the daughter of Astyages, and of Cambyfes king of Persia: That for the first twelve years of his life he staid in Persia with his father, where he was educated after the Persian manner in hardship, labour, and in all such exercises, as would best prepare him for the fatigues of war^c, in which he exceeded all his cotemporaries. The name of Persia then extended only to one province. Afterwards, when it had the empire of the east, the name thereof reached much further; from the river Tigris on the

^b Justin lib. 1. cap. 4.—7. ^c Xenophon *Cyropædia*, lib. 1. p. 3. in Editione apud Wechelum 1596. qua utor.

the west, to the river Indus on the east; and from the Caspian sea to the north, to the ocean on the south. Cyrus being twelve years old, was sent for into Media by Astyages, his grandfather^d, with whom he continued five years, where, by his generous behaviour, he so gained the hearts of the Medes, as did afterwards tend to obtaining the empire he erected. In the sixteenth year of his age, Evil-merodach being abroad on a hunting expedition, made an inroad to the territories of the Medes, which drew out Astyages with his forces to oppose him. There Cyrus accompanying his grandfather, behaved so well^e, that the victory then gained was chiefly owing to his valour. Next year he went home to his father in Persia, where he continued to the fortieth year of his life. At which time being called to assist his uncle Cyaxares, he marched with an army of thirty thousand men, as above-mentioned, and behaved himself so wisely, as in the space of twenty years, he made himself master of the greatest empire that had ever been erected in the east; which he established so, that it subsisted above two hundred years, though his successors were far from being possessed of his virtue.

Neriglissar understanding that Cyrus was come with such an army to assist the Medes, sent ambassadors to the Lydians, Phrygians, Carians, Capadocians, Cilicians, and other neighbouring nations, to call them to his aid^f, and drew them all into a confederacy*. The king of Armenia, who had to this time lived in subjection to the Medes, looking on them as ready to be swallowed up, refused

^d Xenophon *Cyropædia*, lib. I. p. 8. ^e Idem, lib. I. p. 19. ^f Idem, lib. 2. p. 39. * Ant. Chr. 558. Neriglissar.

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refused any longer to pay his tribute, or send his auxiliaries to the war^a. To crush this revolt, Cyrus marched with great expedition, with the best of his horse into Armenia, where he surprised the king, and took him and all his family prisoners: And having planted garrisons in the country, came to terms with the Armenians^b, so as receiving from him the tribute and auxiliaries he demanded, he restored him to his kingdom, and returned to Media. Both parties having been for three years forming their alliances, in the fourth year of Neriglissar, armies took the field, and it came to a fierce battle between them; wherein Neriglissar being slain^c, the Chaldean army was put to the rout, and Cyrus had the victory. Croesus king of Lydia, upon the death of Neriglissar^d, being next in dignity to him, took the command of the vanquished, and made as good a retreat as he could: But next day Cyrus pursuing, overtook them at a disadvantage, and entirely routed them, taking their camp and all their baggage, which he effected chiefly by the assistance of the Hyrcanians, who had the night before revolted to him. Whereupon Croesus made the best of his way to Lydia, having the night before sent thither his women, and the best of his furniture. The death of Neriglissar was a great loss to the Babylonians; for he was a very brave and excellent prince, only he had to deal with Cyrus, whom God designed for the empire of the east, and nothing was to withstand him. The loss of this prince appeared the greater, by the succeeding of his son, whom Josephus calls Labosfordachus^e, who was given to all

^a Xenophon Cyropædia, lib. 2. p. 39. ^b Idem, lib. 3 p. 48. ^c Idem, ^d Ibid. ^e Ant. Chr. 536. Neriglissar 4. ^f Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 12. p. 356.

all manner of wickedness, cruelty and injustice. Two acts of violence done by him against two of his principal nobility, Gobrias and Gadates¹, did contribute very much to ruin the Babylonian empire. The only son of the former he slew at a hunting to which he had invited him, for no other reason, but that he had with success thrown his dart at a wild beast, when himself had missed it; and the other he caused to be castrated, because one of his concubines had commended him for a handsome man. These injuries done to those men of quality, drove them with the provinces which they had governed, to revolt to Cyrus; and the whole empire suffered by it. For Cyrus hereby penetrated into the very heart of the enemies country, taking first possession of the province and castles of Gobrias and afterwards doing the same with these of Gadates. The Chaldean king endeavoured to be before him in revenging the revolt of Gadates; but Cyrus put him to the rout, and forced him to retire to Babylon; and after he had ravaged the country, and shewed himself twice before the walls of that city, and secured fortresses on the frontiers, he took up his winter quarters in Media, where he and Cyaxares consulted about the operations of the war. Cyrus being gone from before Babylon, Labosordachus gave himself a loose to all his wicked and tyrannical inclinations, by which he became so intolerable, that his own people² conspired against him and killed him, after he had reigned only nine months. He is not mentioned in the canon of Ptolemy, because his father Neriglissar being killed

¹ Xenophon in *Cyropædia*, lib. 4. p. 112. & lib. 5. p. 135. & seqq.

² Herodotus apud Josephum, contra Apponem, lib. 1. p. 1045.

killed in the spring, the remaining nine months of that year, are reckoned to him, according to the method of that author.

After him succeeded Nabonadius, and reigned seventeen years^a. He is called by Berosus^o, Nabonidus; by Herodotus, Labynetus^p, and is the same with Naboandelus, as Josephus says^q, he was called by the Babylonians, and Belshazzar, the last monarch of Babylon: For we find it foretold in Jeremiah xxvii. 7. *that all nations shall serve him, viz. Nebuchadnezzar, and his son, and his sons son.* Now Evil-merodach was the son of Nebuchadnezzar, Neriglissar was not the son of Evil-merodach, but his sister's husband. But Belshazzar, or Nabonadius, was the son of Evil-merodach the grandchild of Nebuchadnezzar the Great; so the prediction of Jeremiah was fulfilled: And thus the bulk of Commentators and other authors understand it. This Belshazzar hath the character in Xenophon^r, of an impious prince, which appears more certain from the account given of him in Daniel chap. v. But his mother, whom Herodote calls Nitocris^s, was a woman of a masculine spirit, who, while her son followed his pleasures, took the main burden of the government upon her. Cyrus, after consultation with Cyaxares, resolved to carry on the war, by taking fortresses and important towns, that by degrees he might become master of the Babylonish empire; and thus they employed themselves for several years. In the mean time Nitocris did all she could to fortify the metropolis, and perfect the works that

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^a Canon Ptolemæi. ^o A. M. 3395. Ant. Chr. 555. Belshaz. 1.
^q Apud Josephum, p. 1045. ^p Herodote lib. 1. cap. 77. ^q Antiq. lib.
10. cap. 12. p. 350. ^r Dan. v. ^s Cyropædia, lib. 7. p. m. 192. ^t Lib.
1. cap. 185.

Nebuchadnezzar had begun at Babylon, but all this was to no purpose, when the city was taken by surprise.

In the first year of Belshazzar's reign, which was the thirty-fourth after the destruction of Jerusalem, Daniel had revealed to him the vision of the four monarchies, and of the kingdom of the Messias, which was to succeed them, as related in Daniel vii. In the third year of the same reign, which was the thirty-seventh after the destruction of Jerusalem *, Daniel saw the vision of the ram and the he-goat; whereby was signified the overthrow of the Persian empire by Alexander the Great, and the persecution raised against the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, as more fully in Daniel viii. Where we find this was revealed to him at Shushan the palace, in the province of Elam, while he attended there as a minister of state, upon the king of Babylon's affairs: which shews Shushan then to have been in the hands of the Babylonians. But about three year after, Abradates, the vice-roy of Shushan, revoking to Cyrus †, it was joined to the empire of the Medes and Persians; and the Elamites came with the Medes to besiege Babylon ‡, and Elam was restored to liberty §.

Cyrus making great progress in his conquests, by taking fortresses, towns and provinces from the Babylonians; to put a stop thereto, Belshazzar, in the fifth year of his reign ‖, went into Lydia, to King Croesus his confederate, and by his assistance framed a formidable confederacy against the Medes and Persians, and with his treasure hired a numerous army of Egyptians, Greeks and Thracians,

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* Ant. Chr. 353. Belsh. 3. † Cyropædia, lib. 6. p. m. 155. ‡ Isa. xxi. 2. § Jer. xlix. 39. ‖ A. M. 3399. Ant. Chr. 358. Belsh. 5.

out of all the nations of the Lesser Asia; over whom he appointed Croesus to be general; sent him to invade Media, and then returned to Babylon. Cyrus having intelligence of these measures, made suitable preparations to withstand the storm. Croesus was deceived into this war by the fallacious oracles of the heathens, which he frequently consulted, according to the idolatrous customs of those times. One of their responses told him, That he should be in no danger, till a male should reign over the Medes: which he never understood of Cyrus, who had a Mede for his mother, and a Persian for his father. Another oracle told him, That when he passed the river Halys, he would overthrow a great empire; which he took to be that of the Persians, and not his own. Being cheated by these and the like false responses of demons, he went on with the war, passed the river Halys, and took the city Pteria^a. But Cyrus engaged with him in battle, and put his numerous army to flight. Whereupon Croesus returned to Sardis, and there dismissed his auxiliaries, ordering them to attend him next spring; little thinking he would presently stand in need of them. But Cyrus pursuing his victory into Lydia, came upon him suddenly; and the Persian camels so frightened the Lydian horses, that the Lydians were all soon put to flight, and forced to retire into Sardis; where Cyrus immediately besieged them. While he lay at the siege of this city, he celebrated the funerals of Abradates prince of Shushan, and Panthea his wife. The woman was very beauti-

VOL. II. *to the end of the first century.*

^a Cyropædia, lib. 6. p. 158.

^b Herodot. lib. 1. cap. 53.—56.

^c Herodot. lib. 1. cap. 75, 76.

^d Anti. Chr. 549, Belsa. 9.

ful, and had been taken prisoner by the Persians in a battle against the Babylonians. Cyrus having treated her kindly, and kept her chaste for her husband, the sense of this generosity drew Abradates into the service of Cyrus. And he being killed in the war, his wife slew herself, out of grief, upon his dead body. And Cyrus took care to have them both honourably buried; and a stately monument was erected over them near the river Pactolus, which remained for a long time. But the great care of Cyrus was, vigorously to push on the siege; which he did with that success, that Sardis was taken before succours could arrive; and Croesus being made prisoner, and in danger of death by a soldier, his son, who from his infancy had been dumb in spite of all means of recovery, seeing his father in this case, is said to have cried out, *Sir, do not kill Croesus*! This king being brought to Cyrus, was ordered to be burnt on a pile of wood. On the sight thereof, he minded a conference he before had with Solon, a wise Athenian philosopher, (who hearing him boast of his riches and prosperity, told him, that no man could be counted happy before death) and thereupon cried out, *Solon! Solon! Solon!* Which being told to Cyrus, he allowed the captive prince to repeat the whole story; and the compassionate conqueror not only spared the life of Croesus, but also gave him an honourable subsistence, and employed him as one of his chief counsellors all his life, and at his death recommended to his son Cambyses to follow his advice. The taking of this city is placed by Eusebius in the first year of the fifty-eighth

* Cyropædia, lib. 7. p. 184, — 186. † Herodot. lib. 1. cap. 85.

* Ibid. cap. 86, & seqq.

† In Chronico.

eighth Olympiad, which was the eighth year of Belshazzar, and the forty-first after the destruction of Jerusalem.

After this Cyrus continued some time in the Lesser Asia, till he had brought the several nations which inhabited it, from the Egean-sea to the empire of the Medes, into thorough subjection. From hence he went into Syria and Arabia; where he did the same, and then marched into the Upper Asia; where having reduced the whole country under his obedience, he marched to Babylon, as the only place of the east which then held out against him*. Having overthrown Belshazzar in battle, he shut him up in his metropolis, and there besieged him for eight years, after taking Sardis. This siege proved a very difficult work: For the walls of Babylon were high and impregnable, the number of men to defend them was very great, and they were furnished with all sorts of provisions within for twenty years²; and the empty ground within the city, both for fruit, tillage and pasturage, was sufficient to furnish them for much more. Wherefore the besieged mocked at Cyrus's army from the top of their walls; yet he went on, and drew a line of circumvallation round the city, making the ditch broad and deep; and by the help of palm-trees, which grow in that country to the height of a hundred feet, he erected towers higher than the walls. But finding the city was not to be taken by an assault, he endeavoured to starve it into a surrender, and divided his forces into twelve parts, that each in his month might guard the trenches with less fatigue. But after
two

* A. M. 3410. Ant. Chr. 540. Belsh. 16.

² Xenophon in Cyropædia, lib. 7. p. 190.—192.

two years had been spent this way, and nothing done, he fell on a stratagem, which with little difficulty made him master of the city †. For finding that a great annual festival was to be kept at Babylon, to the idol Shoshachⁿ, at which the people used to spend the whole night in revelling and drunkenness, he sent a party of his men up the river Euphrates, that runs through the city, to the canal that leads into a great lake; where, by breaking the dam, he let so much of the river into the lake, as the channel that entered the town was fordable¹; in the mean time setting one part of his army where the river ran into the city, and the other where it came out, he ordered his men to enter the town by the channel of the river as soon as possible. Gobrias and Gadates, who were guides to the Medes and Persians, finding the gates upon the river open that night, entered without any opposition, killed the guards, and went straight into the palace; where they slew the king, fighting for his life, and those that were with him. Proclamation being made of safety for life to all such as should submit, and bring in their arms, but of death to such as should refuse, all yielded to the conqueror; and Cyrus became master of the city, which concluded his conquests, after a war of twenty-one years. This account, given by Herodote and Xenophon, of the taking of Babylon, exactly agrees with the holy scriptures: For we find, Dan. v. that *Belshazzar made a feast for a thousand of his lords, for his wives, and for his concubines, drinking in the golden vessels brought out of the temple at Jerusalem, and praising their gods of gold,*

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Ant. Chr. 539. Belsh. 19.

† Athenæi Deipnosophistæ, lib. 14. cap. 17. Herodot. lib. 2. cap. 191.
 Cyropædia Xenophontis, lib. 7. p. 190.—192.

gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone. That very night Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Mede, that is, Cyaxares, the uncle of Cyrus, took the kingdom; for Cyrus allowed him the title of all his conquests as long as he lived. That night, divine Providence caused a hand to write a sentence upon the wall, *MENE MENE TEKEL PERES UPHARSIN*; intimating, *God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it: thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting: thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.* The king saw the appearance of the hand; and being struck with fear and terror, called for his wise men and magicians, to read and interpret the inscription. But none of them being able to do it, the queen, who is supposed to have been Nitocris the queen-mother, caused send for the prophet Daniel; who read and faithfully interpreted the writing, as above expressed. That same night was the palace taken, and the king slain: For candles were lighted before the hand-writing appeared^k; and some hours must have passed before the magicians were called, and after them Daniel, who made the interpretation, which was accomplished in the end of the night, or beginning of the next morning.

In the taking of Babylon ended the Babylonish empire, after it had continued, from the reign of Nabonassar, who first founded it, two hundred and nine years^l. And here ended the power and pride of this great city, fifty years after the Babylonians had destroyed the city and temple of Jerusalem; and many prophecies of sacred scripture were fulfilled: For it was foretold, That the Lord would stir up the Medes against Babylon; that

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^k Dan. v. 8. ^l Canon Ptolemaei.

*Elam (or the men of Persia) and Media should besiege it^m; that the kings of the Medes should execute the vengeance of God upon it, the vengeance of his templeⁿ; that her waters should be dried up, her sea and her springs made dry^o; that it should be taken in the time of a feast, while her princes, her wise men, her captains, and her rulers were drunk; that they should sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake^p; that the Lord would cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, the son and nephew^q; or, the son and grandson; for the Hebrew word *neked*, Gen. xxi. 23. is translated, *the son's son*, and may justly be so; and it appears from the above history, that Evil-merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar his grandson, were both cut off by violent deaths, and the last of them in the taking of the city. It was also foretold, that Babylon should be a possession for the bittern, and pools of water^r: Which was fulfilled, when by breaking down the banks at the head of the canal, the river was turned into the lake. And no care being taken afterwards to repair the breach, all the country on that side was overflowed and drowned: The breach became so wide, as to be irreparable, unless by a vast expence; which none bestowed: And the part of the river that went up to the city became so shallow, as to be unfit for navigation. So that not one word of these predictions failed.*

After the death of Belshazzar, Darius the Mede is said to have taken the kingdom^s: For though all was gained by the conduct and valour of Cyrus, yet as long as his uncle lived, he allowed him a joint

^m Isa. xlii. 17. and xxi. 2. ⁿ Jer. li. 17, 17.—30. ^o Jer. l. 38. and li. 36. ^p Jer. li. 39, 57. ^q Isa. xiv. 22. ^r Isa. xiv. 23. ^s Dan. v. 31.

^t A. M. 3412. Ant. Chr. 538. Daril. 17. C. 4.

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joint title: But the power of the army, and the management of affairs, being in the hands of Cyrus, he only was looked upon as the chief governor of the empire, which he founded: and therefore there is no notice taken of Darius in the Canon of Ptolemy: But after the death of Belshazzar, who is there called Nabonadius, Cyrus the Persian is placed as his next successor, as he really was. Cyrus having settled his affairs in Babylon, went into Persia, to make a visit to his father and mother, who were yet alive. On his return through Media, he married the daughter of Cyaxares, with whom he had the kingdom of Media in reversion, for she was her father's only child: And Cyaxares accompanied him and his new wife back to Babylon, where they divided the empire into one hundred and twenty provinces, over which they set so many princes^a. Over these were appointed three presidents, and of them Daniel was the first; to which his great wisdom and long experience in affairs gave him a just title; for he had now, from the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, been employed full sixty-five years as a prime minister of state under several kings of Babylon. This high station stirred up so great envy against him among the other courtiers, that finding his fidelity in the management of public affairs unquestionable, they framed an impious law, *That whosoever should ask a petition of any god or man, for thirty days, save of King Darius, should be cast into the den of lions*. The terror of such a death did not make Daniel omit so necessary a duty, as prayer to his God: Wherefore his enemies prevailed to have him thrown into the den. But God in a miraculous

^a Xenophon in *Cyropædia*, lib. 8. p. 235, — 252. ^b Dan. vi.

lous manner delivered him: *Faith stopped the mouths of lions*; to encourage believers at all times to perform their duty, whatever it cost them. The mischief returned upon the head of those who contrived it, and Daniel prospered as long as he lived. In the same first year of Darius the Mede, Daniel, as in the sixth chapter of his book, reckoning that the seventy years of Judah's captivity were now drawing to an end, earnestly prayed that God would remember his people, and grant restoration of Jerusalem. Whereupon he had assurance given him, by the angel Gabriel, not only of the deliverance of Judah from their temporal captivity, but also of a far greater redemption God would give his church, in their freedom from sin and Satan by the Messiah, to be accomplished at the end of seventy weeks *after the going forth of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem*; that is, at the end of four hundred and ninety years; which prophecy shall be afterwards more particularly explained.

Cyrus, on his return to Babylon, mustered all his forces, which he found to be one hundred and twenty thousand horse, two thousand scythed chariots, and six hundred thousand foot; of these he distributed as many into garrisons, as were necessary for the defence of the several parts of his empire, and marched with the rest in an expedition into Syria; where he settled these parts, and reducing all under his power, as far as the Red-sea, and the confines of Ethiopia. In the interim Cyaxares staid at Babylon, he is called in the sacred scripture Darius the Mede, and seems about this time to have coined the famous pieces of gold called

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led Darics, which by reason of their fineness, were for several ages preferred before all other coin, throughout all the east^a. Suidas^a owns, that they were before the reign of Darius Hystaspes; and there is no other famous Darius before him but this Median. They weighed two grains more than one of our guineas^b; and being all of the purest gold, they may be reckoned worth twenty-five shillings of our money. About two years after this, Cyaxares dying, the parents of Cyrus being also dead in Persia^c, Cyrus himself took on him the whole government of the empire, over which he reigned, according to Xenophon seven years^d. Cicero reckons^e, from his first coming out of Persia with an army to assist Cyaxares, to his death, thirty years, and Ptolemy^f, that from the taking of Babylon, when Nabonadius or Belshazzar was killed, to the death of Cyrus, were nine years; so that Xenophon, and the canon of Ptolemy do well agree.

In the first of these seven years that Cyrus was sole monarch of the empire, he, by a public decree, gave licence to the Jews to return again to their own country, and to build a house to the Lord at Jerusalem^g. The seventy years captivity, of which Jeremiah xxv. 11, 12. xxix. 10. had prophesied, were just then expired. For the captivity began in the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah, a year and two months before the death of Nabopolassar; thereafter Nebuchadnezzar reigned 43 years, Evil-merodach 2 years, Neriglissar 4 years, Nabonadius, or Belshazzar, 17 years, and Darius the Median 2 years; to which if we add

VOL. II.

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^a Herodot. lib. cap. 168. ^a Sub voce *Sapeix*. ^b Prideaux's Connection part 1. p. m. 129. ^c Xenophon, Cyropæd. lib. 8. p. 233. ^d Ibidem. ^e De Divinatione, lib. 1. cap. 23. ^f Canon Ptolemæi. ^g Ezra i. 1, 2.

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^a Herodot. lib. cap. 168. ^b Sub voce *Σαρπητος*. ^c Prideaux's Connection part 1. p. m. 129. ^d Xenophon, Cyropæd. lib. 8. p. 233. ^e Ibidem. ^f De Divinatione, lib. 1. cap. 23. ^g Canon Ptolemæi. ^h Ezra i. 1, 2.

ten months of the first year of Cyrus, as sole monarch at Babylon, and put the whole together, we shall find the 70 years captivity just expired in the 9th month of the Jewish year, which is the November of ours. All the particulars agree with the holy scriptures, and the canon of Ptolemy, as hath been illustrated in the above history. 'Tis very like that the decree in favour of the Jews, was obtained by the prophet Daniel. He was a person of the greatest wisdom, experience, and authority in the province of Babylon, next to the king; and being thoroughly acquainted with the holy scriptures, and having a tender concern for the interest of the church, and of his own countrymen, as appears by his fervent prayers^b, he might shew to Cyrus the prophecies of Isaiah xlv. 28. xlv. 1, 13. where Cyrus is named for this service, more than 100 years before he was born; and it seems, implied in the words of the decree^c, *Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem which is in Judah*; and it is affirmed by Josephus^k, that this emperor had seen these predictions. Besides, in his late expedition into Syria and Palestine, having viewed so large and so good a country as that of Judea lying desolate, he might justly be moved with a desire to have it re-peopled: And who could be so proper again to plant a desolate country as its former native inhabitants? But, whatsoever second causes inclined him to it, the over-ruling power of God, which turns the hearts of princes which way he pleaseth, brought it to pass, that in the first year of Cyrus's monarchy

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^b Dan. ix. ^c Ezra i. 2. ^k Ant'q. lib. II. cap. I. p. m. 357.

Period VI. *during the Babylonish Captivity.* 351

over the east, he issued out his royal decree for the re-building of the temple at Jerusalem, and the return of the Jews into their own country. And here ends this period.

But before I go to another chapter, I shall here give a short view of the chronology of the several periods from the Creation of the World to the Birth of Christ.

	<i>Years.</i>
1. From the Creation to the Deluge, in the time of Noah, are	1656
2. From the Deluge to the Promise made to Abraham	370
3. From the Promise to the Deliverance out of Egypt	430
4. From the Deliverance out of Egypt to the building of Solomon's Temple	480
5. From thence to the Beginning of the Captivity	408
6. The years of the Captivity	70
7. From the End of Captivity to the Beginning of the 70 weeks, Daniel ix. Cyrus reigned 7 years, Cambyfes 8, Darius Hyftaspes 36, Xerxes 21, Artaxerxes 7, which make up	79
8. From thence to the Birth of Christ 457 years, the other 33 years contained in Dan. ix. 24. being the time of our Lord's Life	457
The whole come to	3950

Six of these periods have been above demonstrated, the other two shall be proved in the sequel of this history.

¹ See Vol. I. page 63, 134, 264. Vol. II. p. 149, 299, 351.

CHAP. II.

The History of the Jews, from their Return out of the Babylonish Captivity, to the End of the Persian Empire, where the Affairs of that Monarchy are also explained.

CYRUS king of Persia having, by remarkable stratagems taken the city of Babylon, and being established in the government there, issued out his decree for restoring the Jews unto their own land, and re-building the temple of God^a at Jerusalem^{*}. They gathered together out of several parts of the kingdom, to Babylon, to the number of forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty persons, with their servants, who amounted to seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven^b. Their chief leaders were Zerubabel, the son of Salathiel, the son of Jehoiachin or Jeconias king of Judah, and Jeshua^c the son of Jehozadak the high-priest. Zerubabel, whose Babylonish name was Sheshbazzar^d, was made governor of the land^e, under the title of Tirshatha, by commission from Cyrus: But Jeshua was high-priest by lineal descent from the Pontifical family; for he was the son of Jehozadak^f, who was the son of Seraiah, that was high-priest when Jerusalem was destroyed, and the temple burnt by the Chaldeans.

^a Ezra i. ^{*} A. M. 3414. Ant. Chr. 536. ^b Ezra ii. 64, 65.
^c Ezra ii. 2. ^d Ezra i. 8, 11. ^e Ezra v. 14. ^f 1 Chron. vi. 14.

Chaldeans. Seraiah being then taken prisoner by Nebuzaradan, and carried to Nebuchadnezzar to Riblah in Syria, was there put to death by him^a; but Jehozadak his son being spared as to his life^b, was only with the rest led captive to Babylon, where he died before the decree of the restoration came forth; and therefore the office of the high-priest was then in Jeshua his son; and under that designation he is named^c next Zerubabel, among the first of those who returned. The rest were Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah^d, who were the prime leaders of the people, and the chief assistants to Zerubabel, in re-settling them again in their own land, and are by the Jewish writers reckoned the chief men of the great synagogue. So they call the convention of the elders, which they say, sat at Jerusalem, after the return of the Jews, and did there again re-establish all affairs, both of the church and state.

When Cyrus issued out his decree for re-building the temple at Jerusalem, at the same time he ordered all the vessels to be restored which had been taken from thence^e. Nebuchanezzar, on the burning of the former temple, had brought them to Babylon, and placed them there in the temple of Bel his god: From thence they were, according to Cyrus's order, by Mithredath his treasurer delivered to Zerubabel, who carried them back again to Jerusalem. All the vessels of gold and silver that were at this time restored, were five thousand four hundred; but all the particulars are not enumerated in Ezra ix. 10.; and the remainder

^a 2 Kings xxv. 19.—21. ^b 1 Chron. vi. 15. ^c 1 Ezra ii. 2. Hag. i. 12. & ii. 2. ^d 1 Ezra ii. 2. Neh. vii. 7. ^e 1 Ezra i. 7.—11.

remainder was brought back to Ezra in the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, many years after. Not only these of Judah, but also several Israelites of the other tribes took the benefit of this decree, to return again into their own land^m; for some of them who were carried away by Tiglath-Pileser, Salmanezar and Ezarhaddon, still retained the true worship of God in a strange land, and did not go into the idolatrous usages and impieties of the heathen among whom they were dispersed, but joined themselves to the Jews, when by a like captivity they were brought into the same parts. And some after all the Assyrian captivities were left in the land; for we find some of them still there in the time of Josiahⁿ; and they suffered in the Babylonish captivity as well as the Jews, till at length they were wholly carried away by Nebuzaradan^o, in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar. Many of them had long before left their tribes for their religion^p, and incorporating themselves with the brethren of Judah and Benjamin, dwelt in their cities, and there fell into the same calamities with them under the Babylonians. And of all these, a great number took the advantage of this decree, again to return and dwell in their own cities. For both the decree of Cyrus, as well as that of Artaxerxes, is by name to all the people of Israel^q. And the temple being built both for Israel and Judah, both had a right to worship there; and therefore Ezra, when he returned in the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus^r, sent a copy of the king's decree, whereby that fa-

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^m Tobit i. 10, 12. xiv. 9. ⁿ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9. xxxv. 17, 18. ^o Jer. lii. 39. ^p 2 Chron. xi. 16. xv. 9. xxxi. 6. ^q Ezra i. 3. and vii. 13. ^r Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. cap. 5.

your was granted him, through all Media, where the ten tribes were in captivity, as well as through all Chaldea and Assyria, where the Jews were in captivity; which plainly implies that both of them were included in that decree, and that being a renewing of the decree of Cyrus, both must be understood of the same extent. And we are told in sacred scripture, that after the captivity^s, some of the children of Ephraim and Manasse dwelt in Jerusalem as well as those of Judah and Benjamin. And, finally, it appears from several texts of the New Testament^s, that some of the ten tribes were still in being among the Jews, even to the time of their dispersion, on the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; though then all were comprehended under the name of Jews, which after the Babylonish captivity became the general name of the whole nation, as that of the Israelites was before. This solves the difficulty which ariseth from the difference that is between the general number, and the particulars of these that returned upon Cyrus's decree; for the general number both in Ezra and Nehemiah^u, is said to be forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty; but the particulars, as reckoned up by their several families in Ezra, amounts only to twenty-nine thousand eight hundred and eighteen, and in Nehemiah to thirty thousand one hundred and eighty-nine. The meaning of which is, that only the tribes of Benjamin, Judah and Levi, are reckoned by their families in both these; the rest, being of the other tribes of Israel, are numbered by their gross sum; which makes the gross sum so much exceed

^s 1 Chron. ix. 3. ^t Luke ii. 36. James i. 1. Acts xxvi. 7. ^u Ezra ii. 64. Neh. vii. 66.

exceed the particulars in both the computations. Besides, as Mr. Pool well observes^a, the catalogue in Ezra differs in some numbers and names from that in Nehemiah, which might proceed partly from this, that several names were given to one and the same person, and partly because many changes might happen in the same families between the time of the first making this catalogue in Ezra, and the making of it new, so many years after the former by Nehemiah.

Of the twenty-four courses of the priests that were carried away to Babylon, only four returned^b; which were the courses of Jedaiah, Immer, Pashur and Harim, making up the number of four thousand two hundred and eighty-nine persons: the rest either tarried behind, or were extinct. However, the old number of courses, as established by king David, were still kept up; for of the four courses that returned, each subdivided themselves into six, taking the names of those that were wanting. Hence it is, that after this Matathias is said to have been of the course of Joarib^c, and Zacharias of the course of Abias^d, though neither of these courses were of the number of such as returned. 'Tis a common saying among the Jews^e, that only the bran, that is, the dregs of the people returned to Jerusalem at the end of the captivity, but all the fine flour staid behind at Babylon. 'Tis certain, that notwithstanding the several decrees that had been granted by the kings of Persia, for the return of the Jews into their own land, there were a great many who waved taking any advantage of them, continuing still in Chaldea,

^a Pool's Annot. in Ezra ii. 2. ^b Ezra ii. 36.—39. ^c 1 Maccab ii. 1. ^d Luke i. 5. ^e Talmud Babyl. in Kiddishim apud Prideaux, part i. p. 136.

Chaldea, Assyria, and other eastern provinces where they had been captives: And it is most likely, that those were of the best and richest of the nation who did so; for when they had got houses and lands in those parts, it cannot be supposed that such would be very forward, to leave these good settlements, to replant a country that had lain many years desolate. 'Tis certain that many staid behind, who never returned again to their own land; and if we guess of their numbers by the family of Aaron, they must have been many more than they who settled again in Judea. Hereby it came to pass, that during all the time of the second temple, and for a great many ages after, the number of the Jews in Chaldea, Assyria and Persia, became so great, that they were all along thought to exceed the number of the Jews in Palestine, even in those times when that was best inhabited by others.

Those who made this first return into Judea, arrived there in the month Nisan, the first of the Jewish year^a, which answers to part of March and part of April in our calendar; for the second month of the next year is said to be the second year after their return^a; and therefore at that time they must have been a whole year in the land. As soon as they came thither, they dispersed themselves according to their tribes, into their several cities^a, and there betook themselves to rebuild their houses, and again manure their lands, after they had now (from the destruction of Jerusalem, and the flight of the remainder of the people into Egypt upon the death of Gedaliah)

VOL. II.

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^a A. M. 3475. Ant. Chr. 535.
^a Ezra iii. 8. ^b Ezra ii. 1, 70. and iii. 1. Neh. vii. 6.

lain desolate and uncultivated two and fifty years, according to the number of the sabbatical years, which they had neglected to observe. For according to the Mosaical law^e, they ought to have left their lands fallow every seventh year: But among other commands of God, they had also neglected this; and therefore God made the lands lie desolate, without inhabitants or cultivation^f, till it enjoyed the full number of its Sabbaths that it had been deprived of: Which tells us how long the Jews had neglected the law of the sabbatical year; for 'tis certain the land was desolate only fifty-two years; that is, from the death of Gedaliah until the end of the seventy years captivity, in the first year of the empire of Cyrus. Now, fifty-two sabbatical years make fifty-two weeks, or fifty-two times seven years, which amounts to three hundred and sixty-four years, which carries up the computation to the beginning of the reign of Asa. Therefore from that time, the Jews having neglected to observe the sabbatical years, till they had deprived the land of fifty-two of them, God made the land lie desolate, without cultivation or inhabitants, just so many years, till he had restored to it that full rest which the wickedness of its inhabitants, contrary to the law of their God, had denied it.

On the seventh month, which is called Tisri, all the people, who had returned to their several cities, gathered together at Jerusalem on the first of that month^g, and celebrated the feast of trumpets. This month began about the time of the autumnal equinox, and was formerly the first month of the year,

^e Lev. xxv. 2,—4.^f Lev. xxvi. 34. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17.^g Ezra iii. 1,—6.

year, till it was changed ^a at the time of the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt. For that happening in the month Abib, afterwards called Nisan, for this reason that month had the honour given it from thence to be reckoned among the Israelites for the first of the year in all ecclesiastical matters. Before this Tisri was counted the first¹, because from thence did commence, as was thought, the beginning of all things; it being the general opinion among the ancients, that the world was created, and first began at the time of the autumnal equinox. And for this reason, the Jews do still, in their æra of the creation of the world, as well as in that of contracts, compute the beginning of the year from the first of Tisri; and all their bills and bonds, and all their other civil contracts, are dated among them according to the same computation. From this month also they began all their jubilees and sabbatical years^b. Therefore their ecclesiastical year began from Nisan, and their festivals were reckoned according to it; but their civil year was still reckoned from Tisri: The first day of that month was their new-year's day; and for the more solemn celebration of it, this feast of trumpets seems to have been appointed.

On the tenth day of the same month, when the high-priest made atonement for all the people of Israel, was the great day of expiation; and on the fifteenth day¹ began the feast of tabernacles, which lasted till the twenty-second inclusively. During all these solemnities, the people staid at Jerusalem, employing all that time, to the best of their power,

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^a Exod. xii. 2. ¹ Chaldee Paraphrase on Exod. xii. 2. ^b Lev. xxv. 9.
¹ Lev. xvi. 29, 30. and xxiii. 27, 30. Numb. xxix. 7, 12.

to set forward the restoration of God's worship again in that place. Towards which end, all who had riches contributed according to their abilities: And the free-will-offerings made on this occasion, besides a hundred vestments for the priests, amounted to sixty-one thousand drams of gold^m, and five thousand pounds, or (as in the Hebrew) *minas* of silver; which in all comes to seventy-five thousand five hundred pounds Sterling; For every dram of Gold is worth ten shillings in our money, and every *mina* of silver nine pounds Sterling; for it contained sixty shekelsⁿ, and every shekel of silver is worth, in our money, three shillings. Upon this fund they began the work; and a great sum it was, to be raised by so small a number of people, on their first return from the captivity; especially if they were only of the poorer sort, as the Rabbins say. But it must be supposed, that these offerings were made by the whole nation of the Jews; that is, by those who staid behind at Babylon, as well as those who actually returned: For all having an equal interest in the temple, and in the daily sacrifices there offered, which were in behalf of all, 'tis very reasonable to suppose, that all did contribute to the building of it; and especially, since as long as the temple stood, every Jew annually paid half a shekel (that is, about eighteen-pence of our money) towards its repair^o, and the support of the daily service in it, into what part soever they were dispersed over the world.

The first thing they did^p, was, to restore the altar of the Lord for burnt-offerings. This stood
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^m Ezra ii. 69.ⁿ Ezek. xlv. 12.^o Exod. xxx. 13, 15.^p Ezra iii. 3.

in the middle of the inner court of the temple, exactly before the porch leading unto the holy place; and hereon were made the daily offerings of the morning and evening service, and all other offerings, ordinary and extraordinary, made to God by fire. It was a large pile, built all of unhewn stones, thirty-two cubits (that is, forty-eight feet) square at the bottom. From thence rising one cubit, it benched in one cubit; from thence, being thirty cubits square, it did rise five cubits, and benched in one cubit; and from thence, being twenty-eight cubits square, it did rise three cubits, and benched in two; from whence it did rise one cubit, which was the hearth upon which the burnt-offerings were burned, and the benching in of two cubits breadth was the passage round it, on which the priests stood when they attended the fire, and placed the sacrifices on it. So this hearth was a square, of twenty-four cubits, or thirty-six feet, on every side, and one cubit high, all made of brass; and from hence it was called the *brazen altar*^a. But it is not to be conceived that the whole altar was made of solid brass: For to make up so big a pile all of that metal, would cost a vast sum of money; and if it were so made, it would be against the law^b, commanding, wherever they made an altar, other than the portable altar of the tabernacle, they should make it of earth, or else of unhewn stone; and it would be also impracticable for the use intended, because if it were all of brass, the fire continually burning upon the top of it, would so heat the whole, and especially that part next the hearth, that it would be impossible for the

^a 1 Kings viii. 64.

^b Exod. xx. 24, 25.

the priests to stand on it, when they were to officiate, and offer the sacrifices, especially when they were to do so barefooted.

The zeal of the Jews for the temple being that which had brought most of them back into Judea, the rebuilding thereof was what they had their hearts most intent upon; and therefore, having employed the first year^c in preparing materials, and contracting with carpenters and masons for the work, in the second year^d they laid the foundation of the house with great solemnity^e. For Zerubabel the governor, and Jeshua the high-priest, being present with all the congregation, the trumpeters blew the trumpets, and the musicians sounded their instruments, and singers sung, *to give thanks to the Lord; for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever towards Israel*: And all the rest of the people shouted for joy while the first stones were laid. Only the old men (who had seen the glory of the first temple, and had no expectations that this which was now a-building, by a few poor exiles, lately returned to their country, could ever equal that which had all the riches of David and Solomon, two of the wealthiest princes of the east, expended in erecting it) wept at the remembrance of the old temple; while others rejoiced at the laying the foundations of the new. Indeed the difference between the former temple, and that which was now a-building, was so great, that God himself tells the prophet Haggai^f, that this latter, in comparison of the former, was as nothing, so far did it come short thereof. This is not to be understood in respect of its bigness; for the se-

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^c Ezra iii. 7.

^d Ant. Chr. 334. Cyri 3.

^e Ezra iii. 8.—13.

^f Chap. ii. 3.

cond temple was of the same dimensions with the first, being built upon the same foundations, and therefore it was exactly of the same length and breadth.

But the glory of Solomon's temple was not in the temple itself, far less in the bigness thereof; for that alone was a small pile of building, as containing no more than one hundred and fifty feet in length, and one hundred and five in breadth, taking the whole together from out to out. The main grandeur and excellency of it consisted, first, in its ornaments and workmanship, being every where exceeding curious, and its overlayings vast and prodigious; for the overlaying of the holy of holies only, which was a room of thirty feet square, and thirty feet high, amounted to six hundred talents of gold^r; which comes to four millions three hundred and twenty thousand pounds Sterling. Secondly, In its materials. Solomon's temple was all built of new, large marble stones, hewn out in the most curious and artful manner; whereas the second temple was mostly of such stones only as were digged out of the ruins of the former. Thirdly, In its out-buildings. For the court in which the temple stood, and that without it, called *The court of the women*, were built round with stately buildings and cloisters; and the gates entering thereunto, were very beautiful and sumptuous. The outer court was a large square, encompassing all the rest, of seven hundred and fifty feet on every side, surrounded with a most stately and magnificent cloister, sustained by three rows of pillars on three sides, and by four on the fourth. But I have spoke more

more fully of Solomon's temple in a former part of this work. All the out buildings then lay in rubbish, without any prospect of a speedy reparation; and there could be no such ornaments or materials in this new temple as there were in the former. In process of time indeed all the out-buildings were restored, and such ornaments and materials added, on Herod the Great's repairing of it, as after that the second temple came in some measure nearer to the former in external splendor, though never equal to it.

But still, the extraordinary marks of divine favour, which were the main honour of the first temple, were wholly wanting in the second: particularly, first, *the ark of the covenant*, which was a small chest or coffer², three feet nine inches in length, and two feet three inches in height; in which were put the two tables of the law, and there was nothing else in it when it was brought into Solomons temple³. The original volume of the law, written by Moses's own hand, Aaron's rod, and the pot of manna, seem to have been in a coffer or coffers⁴ at the sides of the ark. The author of the book of Cozri, justly remarks, That the ark, with the mercy-seat and cherubims, were the foundation, root, heart and marrow of the whole temple, and of all the Levitical worship therein performed: and therefore, had there nothing else of the first temple been wanting in the second, but the ark only, this alone would have been reason enough for the old men to have wept, when they remembered the first temple, in which these

¹ See p. 170, 171. ² Exod. xxv. 10, — 22. ³ 1 kings, viii. 9. 2 Chron. v. 10. ⁴ Deut. xxxi. 26. Exod. xvi. 33. Numb. xvii. 10. See Prideaux's Connection, part I. p. 145, — 151.

these were. 'Tis true, that defect seems to have been supplied in some measure; for in the second temple there was also an ark made, of the same shape and dimensions with the first, and put in the same place. But though it was there substituted in its stead, (as there was need that there should be such an one, for the service that was annually performed before on the great day of expiation) yet it had none of its prerogatives or honours conferred upon it; for there were no tables of the law, no Aaron's rod, no pot of manna in it, no appearance of divine glory over it, no oracles given from it. The first ark was made and consecrated by God's appointment, and all those prerogatives and honours given to it by him: But the second being appointed and substituted by men only, to be in the place and stead of the other, could have none of them; and the only use that was made of it, was, to be a representation of the former on the great day of expiation, and to be a repository of the holy scriptures.

A second thing wanting in the second temple, which was in the first, was, the Shechinah, or the divine presence, manifested by a visible cloud resting over the mercy-seat. This cloud did first appear there when Moses consecrated the tabernacle; and was afterwards, on the consecrating the temple by Solomon, manifested thicker, and there did continue in the same visible manner, till that temple was destroyed; but after that it never appeared more. Its constant place was directly over the mercy-seat; but it rested there only when the ark was in its proper place, and not when it was

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in movement from place to place, as it often was during the time of the tabernacle.

A third thing wanting in the second temple, which was in the first, is the Urim and Thummim. What this was, the scripture hath no where explained any further, than that it was something which Moses did put into the breast-plate of the high priest. This breast-plate was a piece of cloth doubled, of a span square; in which were set, in sockets of gold, twelve precious stones, bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, engraven on them; which being fixed to the ephod or upper vestment of the high-priest's robes, was worn by him on all solemn occasions^e, with the Urim and Thummim. Among a variety of opinions^f, which learned men have advanced on this point, which do rather perplex than explain it, it appears safest to hold that the words Urim and Thummim meant only the divine virtue and power given to the high-priest, who wore this breast-plate after his consecration, of obtaining an oraculous distinct answer whenever counsel was asked of him; and that the words Urim and Thummim, were given to signify the clearness and perfection which these answers carried with them. For they were not like the heathen oracles, enigmatical and ambiguous, but always clear and manifest, nor such as did ever fall short of perfection, either of fulness in the answer, or certainty in the truth thereof. The priest was to ask counsel of God in difficult and momentous cases, relating to the whole state of Israel. In order thereto, the high-priest did put on his robes, and over them the

^e Exod. xxviii. 15.—30, Lev. viii. 9. ^f See Prideaux Connection, part I. p. 151.

the breast-plate, in which the Urim and Thummim were, and then presented himself before God, to ask counsel of him. But he was not to do this for any private man, but only for the king and the president of the sanhedrim, for the general of the army, or for some other great prince or governor of Israel, and not for private affairs, but for such only as related to the public interest of the nation in church or state. The place where he presented himself before God, was before the ark of the covenant, not within the veil of the holy of holies (for thither he never entered but once a-year on the great day of expiation), but without the veil in the holy place: And there standing, as hath been already described, with his face turned directly towards the ark and the mercy-seat, on which the divine presence rested, he proposed the matter probably with solemn prayer and invocation of the name of God; and directly behind him, at some distance, without the holy place, perhaps at the door, (for further no layman might approach) stood the person in whose favour the counsel was asked, whether it were the king, or any public officer of the nation, and there with all humility and devotion expected the answer that should be given. But how the answer was given, hath made the dispute. To me the learned Dr. Prideaux's^e opinion seems most plausible, and best to answer the question; namely, That when the high-priest appeared before the veil, to ask the counsel of God, the answer was given him by an audible voice, as an earnest of God to be manifested in the flesh^h; which voice was

^e Connection, part 1. p. m. 155. ^h Dr. Patrick on Numb. vii. 89.

was from the mercy-seat that was behind the veil. There Moses went to ask counsel of God in all cases, and from thence he was answered. In the same way God did afterwards communicate his will to the governors of Israel as often as he was consulted by them, only with this difference, that whereas Moses, through the extraordinary favour granted to him, had immediate access to the divine presence, and God did speak to him¹, as it were *face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend*. No other was admitted thither to ask counsel of God, but through the mediation of the high-priest², who in his stead asked counsel for him by Urim and Thummim; and when he presented himself in the due manner, according to the prescription of the divine law, God gave him an answer in the same manner as he did unto Moses, that is, by an audible voice from the mercy-seat. For in many instances recorded in scripture³, of God's being consulted this way, the answer in every one of them, except two⁴, is ushered in with *The Lord said*. When God was consulted by Urim and Thummim in the camp, the answer seems to have been after another manner: for it appears by scripture, that either the high-priest, or one deputed by him, went with the armies of Israel to the wars; and carried with him the ephod and breast-plate, to ask counsel of God in all difficult emergencies. Thus Phinehas went to the wars against the Midianites, with the holy instruments⁵, that is, with the ephod and breast-plate; which, say

¹ Exod. xxv. 22 and xxx. 6. Numb. vii. 89. ² Exod. xxxiii. 17. ³ Numb. xxvii. 21. Judges xx. 28. ⁴ Judges i. 1, 2. and xx. 18, 23, 28. 1 Sam. x. 22 and xxiii. 2, 4, 11, 12. 2 Sam. ii. 1. and v. 19, 23. ⁵ 1 Sam. xxx. 8. 2 Sam. xxi. 2. ⁶ Numb. xxi. 6.

the Rabbins, were put into an ark or coffer made on purpose for it, and carried by the Levites on their shoulders, as the other ark was; and of this they understand that text, where Saul says to Ahiah the high-priest, *Bring hither the ark of the Lord*^P; which could not be the ark of the covenant then at Kirjath-jearim; but it seems the priest anointed for the wars, had a tent in the camp on purpose, erected for his use, in which a part was separated by a veil in the same manner as the holy of holies was in the tabernacle; and when he asked counsel of God in the camp, he appeared there before the veil, in the same manner as before the holy of holies in the tabernacle; and the answer was given him from behind it, though no ark nor mercy-seat was there. Tho' this way of asking divine counsel was frequently used during the standing of Moses's tabernacle, and probably continued long after; yet we find no instance of it in the scripture during the whole time of Solomon's temple: And 'tis most certain, that it was wholly wanting in the second temple; for both Ezra and Nehemiah tell us as much^Q. Hence is that saying among the Jews, *That the holy Spirit spake to the children of Israel during the tabernacle by Urim and Thummim, under the first temple by the prophets, and under the second by Bath-kol*; by which the Jews mean a voice from the clouds, like that in Matth. iii. 17. and xvii. 5. 1 Pet. i. 17.

A fourth thing wanting in the second temple, which was in the first, was the holy fire which came down from heaven on the altar^R, first at the consecrating of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood,

^P 1 Sam. xiv. 18. ^Q Ezra ii. 63. Neh. vii. 63. ^R Lev. ix. 24.

hood; and afterwards at the consecrating of Solomon's temple¹, and was constantly fed night and day without suffering it ever to go out; and with this all the offerings made by fire were offered. For using other fire Nadab and Abihu were consumed by fire from the Lord. This was never restored after the captivity, instead thereof they had only common fire in the second temple.

A fifth particular wanting in the second temple, that was in the first, was the spirit of prophecy; but this was not wholly deficient during all that time, for the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi lived after the second temple was built, and prophesied under it. But on their death, which the Rabbins say happened all in one year, the prophetic spirit wholly ceased from among them, as is owned by the Jewish Seder Olams at the foot of the page.

Besides, there was a sixth thing wanting, that is, the holy anointing oil, which was made by Moses for anointing and consecrating² of the king, the high-priest, and all the sacred vessels made use of in the house of God; and for this use it was commanded to be kept by the children of Israel throughout their generations; and therefore it was laid up before the Lord in the most holy place. And as the original copy of the law was placed there, on the right side of the ark of the covenant; so perhaps the vessel containing this

¹ 2 Chron. vii. 1. Seder Olam Zuta ex versione Genebrardi, Eo tempore cessavit prophetia ab Israel, ipse est annus ter millesimus quadringentesimus quartus, & mortui sunt Haggai, Zecharia & Malachi. Hinc & ultra arripe aurem tuam, & audi verba sapientum. p. m. 140. Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 30. p. m. 122. Huc usque prophetæ per S. Spiritum vaticinati sunt; hinc deinceps inclina aures tuas, & verba sapientum audi.

² Exod. xxx. 12, 13.

this oil was placed on the other side of it, and there kept, till the first temple being laid in ashes, that also was destroyed with it. Every king was not anointed, but only the first of the family: But every high-priest was anointed at his consecration, and so was the priest who went in his stead to the wars. The vessels and utensils were the ark of the covenant, the altar of incense, the shew-bread table, the golden candlesticks, the altar of burnt-offerings, the laver, and all other vessels belonging to them. As they were actually thus anointed at the first erecting of the tabernacles by Moses^a; so if any of them were decayed, destroyed or lost, they could, as long as this anointing oil remained, be again restored, by making and consecrating new ones in their room, of the same virtue and holiness with the former. But this oil being wanting in the second temple, there was a defect of sanctity in all things else belonging to it: For tho' on the return from the captivity, and rebuilding the temple, the Jews did anew make these holy vessels and utensils, put them all in their former places, and applied them to their former uses; yet, thro' want of this oil to consecrate them, these were defective of that holiness in the second temple they had under the first; and their high-priest who did officiate in that temple, was no other way consecrate, than by putting on his vestments.

The trial of adultery by the waters of jealousy also ceased, under the second temple, as we shall have occasion to shew afterwards^b; and other miraculous instances of the divine presence were removed. Upon the whole, all these, and many other

^a Exod. xl. 7. Chap. v.

other particulars of the glory of the first temple, being wanting in the second; there was reason enough for the *ancient men who had seen the first temple, to weep with a loud voice* at the re-building of the second. But all these wants and defects were abundantly repaired, when *the desire of all nations, the Lord whom they sought*, came into this his temple, even when Christ our Saviour, the truest Shechinah of the divine Majesty honoured it with his presence; and in this respect, *the glory of the latter house did far exceed the glory of the former*. And the prophecies foretelling this event had their accomplishment. To go on with the history.

The Samaritans being informed, that the Jews began to re-build the temple at Jerusalem^a, came thither, expressing a great desire to be admitted to worship God at the same temple, offering to join with them in building of it; and telling them, That every since the days of Ezarhaddon king of Assyria, they had worshipped the same God as they did. But Zerubabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the elders of Israel made answer to them, that they not being of the seed of Israel, to whom Cyrus's commission only was given, had nothing to do in building a temple to their God with them. The reason of this answer was, that the Jews saw that the Samaritans intended not sincerely what they said, but came with an ensnaring design to be admitted among them, that they might do them mischief. Besides, they were not of the same religion; for though, from the time they had been infested with lions in the days of Ezarhaddon, they had worshipped the God of Israel, yet it was only in conjunction

^a Ezra iii. 12.^b Mal. iii. 1. Hag. ii. 7.^c Ezra iv.^d Ant. C. 534 Cyri. 3.

conjunction with their other gods^c, whom they worshipped before; and since they at the same time worshipped false gods, in this respect they were idolaters; and this was reason enough for the true worshippers of God to have no communication with them. At which answer, the Samaritans being incensed, did all they could to hinder the work; and though they could not alter the decree of Cyrus, yet they prevailed by bribes and under-hand dealings with his ministers and other officers, to put obstructions to the execution thereof^d, so as for several years the building was delayed: Which the Jews resenting as it deserved, this became the beginning of that bitter rancour that hath ever since been between them and the Samaritans; and this being improved by other causes, came at length to such a height, as nothing was more odious to a Jew than a Samaritan, of which we have several instances in the gospel; and so it still continues: For even to this day, a Cuthean (that is, a Samaritan) in their language, is the most odious name; and that which, in the height of their anger, by way of infamy and reproach, they bestow upon Christians, whom they abominate.

The work of the temple being retarded by these deceitful means, seems to be the cause that Daniel in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, gave himself to fasting and mourning for three weeks together^e. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month of that year, he saw a remarkable vision concerning the succession of several kings, the em-

VOL. II.

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^c 2 Kings xvii. 32, 33. ^d Ezra iv 5. Joseph. Antiq. lib. 11. cap. 2.
^e Dan. x. 3.—5.

pire of the Macedonians, and the conquests of the Romans, contained in the three last chapters of his book: And by what is written in the conclusion of the last of these, he seems to have died soon after. Indeed his great age makes it not likely that he could have lived much longer; for the third year of Cyrus being the seventy-third of his captivity, if we suppose him eighteen years old at his carrying to Babylon, he must at this time have been in the ninety-first year of his age, which was a length of years given to few in those days. He was a very extraordinary person both in wisdom and piety, and was favoured of God, and honoured of men beyond any that lived in his time. His prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah, and other great events in after times, are the clearest and fullest of all we have in the holy scriptures; in so much that Porphyry^f, a heathen, in his objections against our religion, contends that these predictions must have been written after the facts were done; and the Jews do not reckon him to have been a prophet, placing him only among the Hagiographa^g. Though Josephus, one of the most ancient writers of that nation, counts him justly among the greatest of the prophets, and says^h, "That he had familiar converse with God, and did not only foretel future events as other prophets, but also determined the time when they should come to pass; and whereas other prophets foretold evil things, and thereby drew on them the ill-will both of princes and people; Daniel was a prophet of good things to

^f Vids Hieronymi in proœmio ad comment. in Danielcm. præfat in Danielcm.

^h Joseph Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 12.

^g Hieron.

to come, who, by the good report which his predictions carried with them, reconciled to himself the good will of all men; and the event of such of them as were accomplished, procured to the rest a thorough belief of their truth." But what proves the point is, that our Saviour acknowledged Daniel to be a prophet, and styles him so in the gospel¹. Daniel's wisdom reached not only to things divine and political, but also to several arts and sciences. He had skill even in architecture; for Josephus^k tells of a famous edifice built by him at Susa in the manner of a castle, which he says, remained to his time, and was finished with such wonderful art, that it then seemed as fresh and beautiful as if it had been newly built. Within this edifice was the place where the Persian and Parthian kings used to be buried; and for the sake of the founder, the keeping thereof was committed to one of the Jewish nation even to his days. The copies of Josephus now extant, do indeed place this building at Ecbatana in Media; but Jerom, who gives the same account from Josephus, placeth it at Susa in Persia^l, which seems to have been the true reading at that time; for the scripture tells us that Daniel had sometimes his residence there; and the common tradition for many ages past, is, That Daniel died in that city, now called Tuster^m, where they shew his monument even to this day. Part of the book of Daniel is originally wrote in the Chaldean language, that is, from the fourth verse of the second chapter, to the end of the seventh chapter, where the prophet treats of Babylonish affairs:

All

¹ Matth. xxiv. 15. ^k Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 12. ^l Comment. in Dan. viii. 2. ^m Benjaminis Itinerarium.

All the rest is in the Hebrew. In the vulgate edition, there is added, after the 23d verse of the third chapter, the *song of the three children*; and at the end of the book, the *history of Susanna, Bel, and the dragon*. But these editions were never received into the canon of the inspired writings by the Jewish church, nor are they extant in the Hebrew, nor in the Chaldee languages; nor is there any evidence that they ever were so. Jerom^a gives the history of Bel and the dragon no better title than that of the fables of Bel and the dragon. By the death of Daniel, the Jews lost a powerful advocate in the Persian court, which gave their enemies greater occasion to succeed in their designs against them. But though they prevailed to divert these encouragements given by Cyrus to carry on the work of the temple, yet they could not put an open stop thereto: So that as far as the Jews of themselves were able, they still carried it on, in which they were helped by the Tyrians and Sidonians^b, not only in furnishing them with masons, workmen and artificers; but also in bringing the cedars which Cyrus had ordered them out of the forest of mount Libanus, from thence to Joppa by sea, from which place they were carried by land to Jerusalem: For the Tyrians and Sidonians being wholly given to traffic and navigation, did very little addict themselves to olive-yards, vineyards, or tillage of ground; neither had they any territory for either, but were furnished by their neighbours for money or exchange of goods, with corn, wine or oil, and chiefly

^a Hieronym. in præmio ad Danielelem, & in præfat. ad Dan.

^b Ezra iii. 7.

chiefly by the Jews^p; and therefore they readily assisted with their mechanics and shipping, to be supplied with other necessaries. Wherefore, as by their help Solomon had built the first temple; so by their assistance the Jews were enabled to build the second.

In the seventh year after the restoration of the Jews out of Babylon, died Cyrus^q, their great benefactor, after he had reigned, from his first taking on him the command of the Persian and Median armies thirty years, from his taking of Babylon, nine years^r, and from his being sole monarch of the east, after the death of Cyaxares, or Darius the Median, his uncle^s, seven years, being at the time of his death seventy years old. He was a prince of great virtue, and eminent parts, who had founded the empire of Persia, and extended its limits according to Xenophon^t, to the Red Sea on the east, to the Euxine on the north, to Cyprus and Egypt on the west, and to Æthiopia on the south. Authors give very different accounts of his death; for Herodote^u, Justin^v, and Valerius Maximus^x tells us, That making war on Tomyris queen of Scythia, he defeated a part of her forces, and killed her only son: That she being bent upon revenge, assaulted him suddenly with a great army, whereby she defeated the Persians with a great overthrow; and Cyrus being found among the dead, she caused his head to be struck off, and thrown into a hog-head of blood, saying, *Satiate thyself with that which thou long thirsted for.* But the account that Xenophon

^p Acts xii. 20. ^q Ant. C. 530. ^r Canon Ptolemæi. ^s Xenophontis Cyropædia, lib. 8. ^t Ibid. p. m. 238. ^u Lib. I. cap. 214. ^v Lib. 1. cap. 8. ^x Lib. 9. cap. 10.

phon⁷ gives, seems more probable, That after having given his advice to his friends and children, he died in his bed, as fortunately as he lived, leaving the empire in peace to his son; and was buried at Pasdagarda, in Persia; where his monument, according to Strabo⁸, continued to the time of Alexander the Great.

§ 2. Cambyfes succeeded his father Cyrus⁹. He is in sacred scripture¹⁰ called Ahafuerus. As soon as he was settled on the throne, the enemies of the Jews knowing him to be of a temper fit to be wrought upon for doing mischief; instead of opposing the Jews in building the temple by under-hand dealings with the ministers of the court, as they had hitherto done, they now openly addressed the king himself to put a stop to the work. But it seems he had so much respect to the memory of his father, that he could not be induced publicly to revoke his decree; though otherwise he defeated in a great measure the design thereof, by several discouragements, which he put upon it: So that the work went but heavily on all his reign.

Soon after Cambyfes came to the throne, he resolved on a war against the Egyptians, by reason of some offences taken against Amasis their king. The most probable account thereof, is, That Amasis had subjected himself to Cyrus, and become his tributary, but did withdraw his obedience from his successor. For carrying on this war, Cambyfes made great preparations by sea and land¹¹ †. For the sea-service, he engaged the Egyptians and the Phœnicians to help him with their fleets:

⁷ Cyropædis, lib. 8. p. 233 — 239. ⁸ Lib. 15. p. 730. ⁹ Ant. C. 529.

¹⁰ Ezra iv. 6 ¹¹ Herodot. lib. 3. cap. 1, — 19. † Ant. C. 528. Cambyfes 2.

fleets: For the war by land, besides his Persian forces, he hired a great number of auxiliaries from Greece, Ionia and Æolia, who were the strength of his army. He had also great assistance from one Phanes, an Halicarnassian; who being a commander of some Greek mercenaries in the service of Amasis king of Egypt, on some disgust, revolted to the Persian, and gave him such direction in his affairs, as did very much tend to the success of this expedition: For by his advice, Cambyfes contracted with an Arabian king, who lay next the borders of Palestine and Egypt, to furnish him water while he passed the deserts between these two countries; which accordingly was brought him on camels backs, without which he could never have marched his army that way. On his arrival on the borders, he found Amasis newly dead, and Psammenitus, his son and successor drawing together a great army to oppose him. To open his passage into the country, it was necessary to take Pelusium, this being a key to Egypt on that side. But the place being strong by nature and art, furnished with a sufficient garri- son of men, was like to give him a great deal trouble. For preventing whereof, 'tis supposed by the counsel of Phanes, he placed on the front of his army a great number of cats, dogs, sheep * and other of those animals which the Egyptians reckon as deities *: And the Egyptians not daring to throw a dart or shoot an arrow that way, for fear of wounding some of those sacred creatures, he easily made himself master of the place. By this time Psammenitus came up with his army;

* Polyæn. Strateg. lib. 7. p. m. 483. Ant. C. 526.

my, and a bloody battle ensued, wherein the Egyptian army was routed, and the greater part of them were cut to pieces. After this, Cambyfes reduced the city of Memphis; and finding Pfammenitus, his prisoner, endeavouring to raise new troubles, he forced him to drink bull's blood, whereby that prince ended his life. Hereupon all Egypt submitted to the conqueror. The Libyans, Cyrenians, and Barceans, hearing of his success, sent ambassadors to make their submissions to him *. From Memphis he went to Sais, where the Egyptian kings were buried, and there caused the body of Amasis to be digged out of its grave, and after all manner of indignities done to it, burnt it to ashes.

Next year he designed expeditions against the Carthagenians, Hammonians, and Ethiopians: But the Phœnicians refusing to assist him against the first, as being a colony descended of themselves, he bent his mind against the Ethiopians, because they had mocked and maltreated his ambassadors. Accordingly leaving the Grecian auxiliaries to keep the country in awe, he marched in a mad humour his Persian army, unfurnished with necessaries for such an expedition. On his coming to Thebes in Upper Egypt, he detached fifty thousand men to go against the Hammonians, to destroy their country, and burn the temple of Jupiter Hammon. These, after several days march, by a strong wind blowing from the south, as they were at dinner, were all overwhelmed with a mighty torrent of sand ^d. Mean time Cambyfes went on, till his army, in these deserts, wanting all

* Ant. C. 525. Cambyfes 5.

^d Herodot. lib. 3. cap. 25.—28.

all manner of proviſions, had ate their horſes, and were beginning to caſt lots to eat one another. Then he thought it high time to march back to Memphis with the remainder of his army; where he found the Egyptians rejoicing, becauſe they had found the bull Apis^e, their God. He conceiving they mocked him for his bad ſucceſs, commanded Apis to be brought into his preſence; and laughing at ſuch a fooliſh deity, wounded him with his ſword on the thigh, ordered the prieſts to be whipped, and the people who obſerved ſuch ſolemnities to be killed. The poor beaſt languiſhed and died in the temple, and was buried privately by his admirers: And the Egyptians^f ſay, that after this wicked fact, Cambyſes was ſtill troubled with madneſs. But the former actions of this prince, as well as thoſe after it, ſhewed him to be no very wiſe man. For having with him a brother, the only ſon of Cyrus, beſides himſelf, by the ſame mother, whom Herodote calls Smerdis, becauſe he was the only perſon in the army who could draw the bow which Cambyſes's ambaffadors had brought out of Ethiopia, therefore he ſent him home to Perſia, and there cauſed him to be put to death. He killed one of his ſiſters, becauſe ſhe pitied the fate of her brother Smerdis; though ſhe was his wife, and then big with child to him. To ſhew his dexterity in archery, he ſhot a ſon of Prexaſpes his chief favourite, through the heart. He cauſed ſeveral of his chief followers to be buried alive, without any cauſe on their part deſerving ſuch a cruel death, and committed many other wild acts, mentioned more fully by He-

VOL. II.

C c c

rodote^g.

^e Of the Egyptian idolatry, ſee Hiſt. Propag. Chriſtianity, chap. 2, p. 241,—258. ^f Herodot. lib. 3 cap. 29, 30.

rodote^s. At last, returning from Egypt to Persia, as he was mounting his horse at Ecbatana in Syria, his sword falling out of the scabbard, gave him a wound in the thigh^b, of which he died, having reigned seven years five months.

§ 3. The remaining seven months of the eighth year, was the reign of the magian, who, by Herodote¹, is called Smerdis, but in the sacred scripture², Artaxerxes. As soon as he had usurped the kingdom, on the death of Cambyfes, the Samaritans wrote a letter to him, setting forth, That the Jews were rebuilding their city and temple at Jerusalem¹: That they having been always a rebellious people, there was reason to suspect, that as soon as they had finished that work, they would withdraw their obedience from the king, and pay no more toll nor tribute; which might give occasion for all Syria and Palestine to revolt also, and the king to be excluded from any portion on that side of the river Euphrates. And for the truth of what they had informed him as to the rebellious temper of that people, they referred him to the records of his predecessors, wherein they desired search might be made concerning this matter. Enquiry being made into the records, concerning the behaviour of the Jews under the Assyrian and Babylonian empires; and it being found in them with what valour they had long defended themselves, and with what difficulty they were at last reduced by Nebuchadnezzar; an order was issued forth prohibiting them from proceeding any further with the work of the house. So it wholly ceased till the second year of Darius king of Persia,

^s Lib. 3. cap. 30.—40. ^b Ibid. cap. 64. ¹ Ibid. cap. 63. ² Ezra iv. 7.
¹ Ezra iv. 7.—24.

for about the space of two years. Smerdis the usurper being soon after this discovered not to be the true Smerdis, the brother of Cambyfes, as he pretended, but an impostor, a magian, who had his ears cut off for some crime^m in the reign of Cyrus; Otanes, a noble Persian, with six other of the nobility, entered into the palace, and killed the usurper, with his brother Patizithes, the contriver of the whole plot.

§ 4. These seven princes, who had slain these impostors, entering into a consultation among themselves about settling the government, on the sixth day came to this agreement*, *That the monarchy should be continued in the same manner as it was settled by Cyrus; and that for determining which of them should be king, they should meet on horseback next morning against the rising of the sun, at an appointed place near the suburbs of the city Susa; and he whose horse should first neigh, should be monarch*^a. By this method they seemed to refer the determination to the sun, the great deity of the Persians. OEbares, groom to Darius, one of the seven princes, being informed of what was agreed upon, tied a mare to the place where they were to meet, and brought his master's horse to cover her. When the princes came, Darius's horse minding the mare, ran and neighed; and it straight thundered: Whereupon, he was immediately saluted king by the rest; and after the adorations usual among the Persians to their sovereigns, they placed him on the throne. He was the son of Hytaspes, a noble Persian, of the Royal family of Achæmenes, who had followed Cyrus in all his wars, and was at

^m Herodot. lib. 3. cap. 67, — 80.

^a Ant. C. 521. Darius.

^a Ibid.

at that time governor of the province of Persia, and so continued many years after his son's advancement to the throne.

The empire of Persia being thus restored and established by the wisdom and valour of these seven princes, they were afterwards admitted to extraordinary favours and privileges under their new king: For they were to have access to his presence at all convenient times, and their advice was to be first had in all weighty affairs. In a word, they were the prime assistants of the government, and under this character we find mention made of them both in the book of Ezra^a and of Esther^b.

Though by the death of Smerdis the usurper, his edict which prohibited the building of the temple was now at an end; yet the Jews neglecting to resume the work, God for this reason smote the land with barrenness^c. But in the second year of Darius, they being by the prophet Haggai informed of the cause of this judgement, and exhorted to their duty for averting it, they betook themselves again to prepare to carry on the work. On the first day of the sixth month, which answers to about the middle of our August, the word of the Lord came to Zerubabel the son of Salathiel, governor of Judea, and to Joshua the son of Jozadak, the high-priest, concerning this matter; and on the twenty-fourth month, being excited thereby, they arose, with all the remnant of the people, to obey the voice of the Lord, and applied themselves with all diligence to provide stone, timber, and other materials for carrying on the building. To encourage them to go on vigorously,

^a Chap. viii. 14. ^b Chap. i. 14. ^c Haggai, i. 6, — 11. and ii. 16, — 19.

^d Haggai, i. 1, — 15.

ly, on the twenty-first day of the seventh month, which is about the beginning of our October, another message came from God to them, by the same prophet ¹, not only assuring them of the divine presence to make the work prosper in their hands, but also promising, that the glory of the latter house should be greater than the glory of the former; which was accomplished when Christ our Lord came to his temple: In all other respects the latter temple was as nothing in comparison of the former, as hath been already observed.

In the eighth month of the same year, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah ² the prophet, exhorting the Jews to repentance, and promising them mercy and favour on their obedience. On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, which is about the beginning of our December, the Jews having been busy from the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in preparing materials for the temple, put their hands again to the building. Whereupon the prophet Haggai ³ promised them a deliverance from that barrenness of the land with which it had been smitten, and plentiful increase of all its fruits for the future; and also delivered unto Zerubabel a message from God of mercy and favour unto him.

In the beginning of the next year, which was the third of Darius, according to the Babylonian and Persian account, but the second according to the Jewish, the Samaritans, understanding that the building of the temple went on again, notwithstanding the stop they had procured to be put to it in the last reign, betook themselves again to their

¹ Haggai, ii. 1, — 9. ² See p. 362, — 374. ³ Chap. i. 1, — 6. ⁴ Chap. ii. 10, — 23.

their old malicious practices for obstructing the work^a, and to that end applied themselves to Tatnai, whom Darius had made chief governor, or prefect, of all the provinces of Syria and Palestine, (which was one of the twenty prefectures, mentioned by Herodotus^b, into which he had lately divided his whole empire) complaining against the Jews as to this matter, suggested that they proceeded hertin without authority, and that it would tend to the prejudice of the king. Whereupon Tatnai, accompanied with Sethar-boznai, who seems then to have been governor of Samaria, came to Jerusalem, to take account of what they were doing. But Tatnai being a man of temper and justice, after he had viewed the building, did not proceed rashly to put a stop to it; only enquired of the elders of the Jews, by what authority they had gone on with it: And they having produced to him the decree of Cyrus, he would not take upon him to contradict the same, but first wrote letters to the king to know his pleasure concerning it, where he fairly stated the case, and requested that search might be made among the records of the kingdom, whether there were any such decree granted by Cyrus or not, and that the king would be pleased to signify to him what he would have done therein. Whereupon search being made, and the decree being found among the rolls, in the royal palace at Ecbatana in Media^c, (now called Taurus) where Cyrus was when he made it, the king confirmed the same: For having lately married two of the daughters of Cyrus, Atossa and Ariston^d, to fortify his title to the crown,

^a Ezra vi. 3.—19. ^b Herodot. lib. 3. cap. 89. ^c Ezra vi. 2.—14.

^d Herodot. lib. 3. cap. 88.

crown, he thought himſelf concerned to do every thing that might tend to ſupport the honour and veneration due to that great prince; and therefore ordered his royal decree to be drawn, where, in recitement of the decree of Cyrus being made, he commanded it in every particular to be obſerved, and ſent it to Tatnai and Sethar-boznai to ſee it fully put in execution; decreeing, "That whoſoever ſhould alter the ſame, or put any obſtruction to it, ſhould have his houſe pulled down, and that a gallows being made of the timber thereof, he ſhould be hanged thereon." On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, that is, about the beginning of our February, the prophet Zechariah had a viſion made unto him, contained from the ſeventh verſe of the firſt chapter to the ninth verſe of the ſixth chapter of his prophecies, to expreſs the mercy that God would ſhew to his people in the reſtoration of Zion, and the vengeance he would execute upon thoſe who oppreſſed her.

About the beginning of the fourth year of Darius, his decree confirming that of Cyrus in favour of the Jews was brought to Jeruſalem *. In the beginning of the former year, Tatnai ſent to the king about it; and leſs than a year's time cannot be well allowed for the diſpatch of ſuch an affair, eſpecially if we conſider that Shuſhan in Perſia, where the king then reſided, was at ſuch diſtance from Judea, that the journey of a meſſenger thither would take up three months time. Ezra was four months in coming to Judea from Babylon †, which was a quarter of the way nearer. And the

* Ant. Chr. 519. Darü 4. † Ezra vii. 9.

the rolls having been searched at Babylon, and at Ecbatana in Media, for Cyrus's decree; and when found, the same being brought to Shushan, where a new decree was ordered to confirm it, the dispatch of all these affairs, in so great a court, might well take this time. When Tatnai and Setharboznai found how strictly the king required obedience, they durst not but act in conformity to it; And from that time the building of the house went on so successfully, that it was fully finished within three years thereafter: For by virtue of this decree, the Jews were not only fully authorised to go on with the building, but were also furnished with expences for it out of the taxes of the province. This had been granted by Cyrus, but was rendered ineffectual by the Samaritans; and the Jews being then very poor, the work went slowly on, till now being helped by the bounty of Darius, they applied to it with great diligence, and soon brought it to a conclusion. The publishing of this decree at Jerusalem may be reckoned the thorough restoration of the Jewish state: And from the thorough destruction of it, in the burning of the city and temple at Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, to this time, are just 70 years. Therefore the prophet Zechariah^a observes, that to this fourth year of Darius they had observed fasts 70 years which are to be reckoned from the destruction of their city, and the driving of their people out of the land, on the murder of Gedaliah, to this time. But this is not the term of the seventy years captivity prophesied of in the xxvth chapter of Jeremiah; which began with the fourth year of Jehoiakim,

^a Ezra vi. 13.^e Chap. i. 1, — 15.

hoiakim, when their captivity commenced, and ended with the firſt year of Cyrus, when their deliverance began. But ſo remarkable was the reſtoration now completed, juſt ſeventy years after their temple and city were burnt, and their people all diſperſed, that Zechariah ^a aſſures them, that *their faſts of the fourth, of the fifth, ſeventh and tenth months, ſhould be to the houſe of Judah joy and gladneſs, and cheerful feaſts.* The firſt of theſe faſts was obſerved on the tenth day of the tenth month, becauſe then Nebuchadnezzar laid ſiege to Jeruſalem, in the ninth year of Zedekiah ^b; the ſecond was on the ninth day of the fourth month, becauſe on that day the city was taken ^c; the third on the tenth day of the fifth month, becauſe then the city and temple were burnt by Nebuzaradan ^d; and the fourth of theſe faſts was on the third day of the ſeventh month ^e, becauſe on that day Gedaliah was ſlain, and the remainder of the people were diſperſed, and driven out of the land, which completed the deſolation thereof. But now the Lord allows the prophet to ſignify to the Babylo- niſh Jews, that it was not neceſſary any longer to obſerve theſe faſts. When the reſtoration of their ſtate was completed, the reaſon for them ceaſed. We may alſo obſerve, that from the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, according to the Jewiſh account, (which was the ſeventeenth, according to the Babylo- niſh account) when Jeruſalem was deſtroyed ^f, to the fourth year of Darius Hyſtaſpes, when the Jewiſh ſtate was again thoroughly reſtored, were juſt ſeventy years, according to the

Vol. II.

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Canon

^a Chap. xiii. 19.
^b Jer. liii. 12.

^c 2 Kings xxv. 1.
^d Jer. xli. 1.

^e 2 Kings xxv. 3, 4.
^f 2 Kings xxv. 8.

Canon of Ptolemy¹. So here the sacred and profane chronology exactly agree.

In the beginning of the fifth year of Darius, happened the revolt of the Babylonians, which cost him a siege of twenty months^m to reduce them. To make their provisions last the longer, the Babylonians agreed to cut off all unnecessary mouths among them; and therefore, drawing together all the women and children, they strangled them all, excepting only that every man was allowed to save one of his wives whom he loved best, and one maid-servant to do the work of the house. Hereby was signally fulfilled what the prophet Isaiahⁿ foretold concerning them: *These two things shall come to thee, in a moment, in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood; they shall come upon thee in their perfection, for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.* In what greater perfection could these miseries come, than when they executed the same with their own hands? In many other particulars did God inflict vengeance on this wicked city, which was often foretold by the prophets; and the Jews were as often warned to come out of that place, that they might not be involved in its ruins^o. Particularly, the prophet Zechariah^p, two years before these calamities, sent a call from God, to warn the daughter of Zion, that dwelt in Babylon, to flee out of it: And we may suppose that many of the Jews came out of it before the war began. Darius having lain before Babylon one year and
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¹ Vide Canonem Ptolemæi ad calcem Petavii in rationario temporum.

^m Herodot. lib. 3. cap. 150.—160. Justin, lib. 1. cap. 10. Polyæni Strategemata, lib. 7. p. m. 494. ⁿ Isa. xlvii. 9. ^o Isa. xlviii. 20. Jer. l. 8 and li. 6, 9, 45. ^p Chap. ii. 6,—9.

six months, and all means of taking it proving ineffectual, towards the end of the sixth year of his reign he became master of the place by a stratagem of Zopyrus, one of his chief officers *. For he having cut off his nose and ears, and mangled his body all over with stripes, fled in this condition to the besieged; where feigning to have suffered all this by the cruel usage of his master Darius, he grew thereby so far into their confidence, as at length to be made commander in chief of their forces: Which trust, after some defeats to parties of the Persians, he at last made use of to deliver the city to his master, which could scarce have otherwise been taken, the walls being so strong and high, and the place furnished with provisions for so many years. Darius being master of Babylon, he took away all its hundred gates †, and beat down its walls, from two hundred cubits, to fifty cubits high; and the city was given as a spoil to the Persians, once their servants, according to the prophecy of Zechariah ‡. He impaled three thousand of the inhabitants most guilty of the revolt, and pardoned the rest. But by reason of the destruction they had made of their women and children in the beginning of the siege, he was obliged to send for fifty thousand of the weaker sex out of the other provinces of the empire, without which the place must soon become depopulate for want of propagation. Here it is to be observed, that the punishment of Babylon kept pace with the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem, according to Jer. xxv. 12, 13. *It shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of*

* Ant. C. 516. Darii 6.

† Jer. li. 58.

‡ Chap. ii. 9.

of Babylon; and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans:—and I will bring upon that land all that I have pronounced against it. Accordingly, when the restoration of Judah began, in the first year of Cyrus, then began Babylon's punishment, in being conquered, and subjected to the Persians, in the same manner as they had formerly subjected the Jews; and when the restoration of the Jews was completed, and their temple built, in the fourth year of Darius, then was the devastation of Babylon in a great measure completed also. At the same time the city was brought under, the country was destroyed by an inundation, caused by turning the river in order to take the place: Thereby, as the scripture[†] foretold, *it became a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and the sea shall come upon Babylon, and she was covered with the multitude of the waves thereof.* Under which miseries it languished a while, and at length, according to the words of Jeremiah, ended in a perpetual desolation.

In the seventh year of Darius, which is the sixth in the Jewish account, and on the third day of the twelfth month, called Adar, the building of the temple at Jerusalem was finished[‡], and the dedication of it was celebrated with great solemnity and joy*. This work was twenty years a-doing; for so many were elapsed from the second of Cyrus, when it was first begun, to the seventh of Darius, when it was fully finished. The next month after the dedication, which was the month Nisan, the first of the Jewish year, the temple being now made fit for all parts of divine service,

the

[†] Isa. xiv. 23 Jer. li. 41

[‡] Ezra vi. 15.—18.

* Ant. C. 515. Daril 7.

the paſſover was obſerved in it on the fourteenth day of that month", according to the law of God, and ſolemnized by all the children of Iſrael who were then returned from the captivity, becauſe, ſays Ezra^a, *the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Affyria* [that is, of Darius I. for having taken Babylon, he was really king of Affyria] *unto them, to ſtrengthen their hands in the work of the houſe of the God of Iſrael.*

The Samaritans ſtill carrying on their former ſpite and rancour againſt the Jews, gave them new trouble on this occaſion*. The tribute of Samaria had been assigned, firſt by Cyrus[†], and afterwards by Darius[‡], for the reparation of the temple at Jeruſalem, and furniſhing the Jews with ſacrifices, that oblations and ſacrifices might be there daily offered up for the king and the royal family[§]. This was a matter of great regret and heart-burning to the Samaritans, and was the ſource and true origin of all the oppoſitions which they had made againſt them: For they thought it an indignity, to be forced to pay theſe tributes to the Jews; and therefore they, by bribes and other underhand dealings, prevailed with the miniſters of ſtate, and other officers to whoſe charge this matter belonged, during the latter part of the reign of Cyrus, and all the time of Cambyſes, to put a ſtop to this assignment, and did all they could wholly to quaiſh it^b. But the grant being renewed by Darius^c, and the execution of it ſo ſtrictly enjoined, as hath been before related, the tribute was

^a Ezra vi. 18.—22.

[‡] Chap. vi. 22.

* Ant. Chr. 514 Darius

[†] Joſeph. Antiq. lib. 11 cap. 1. [‡] Ibid. cap. 4. [§] Ezra vi. 9, 10.

^b Ezra iv. 5. Joſeph. Antiq. lib. 11 cap. 2. ^c Ezra vi. 6.—12.

was from thence annually paid till this year. But now, on pretence that the temple was finished, though the out-buildings still remained unrepaired, and were not finished till many years thereafter, they refused to allow the Jews any longer to levy the tribute^d, alledging the end ceased, now that the temple was done. To right themselves, the Jews sent Zerubabel the governor, and Ananias, with two other principal men among them, to complain to Darius of the wrong done them, by detaining his royal bounty, contrary to the edict he had made. The king, on hearing the complaint, issued out his royal order to his officers at Samaria, commanding them to take effectual care that the Samaritans obey his edict, in paying their tribute to the temple at Jerusalem, as formerly, and no more, on any pretence whatsoever, to give the Jews any cause to complain of their failure therein. And after this, we hear of no more opposition nor contest concerning this matter, till the time of Sanballat, which was many years afterwards.

As to the other undertakings of Darius Hystaspes, I shall offer but a short account of them, because I design afterwards a digression concerning the affairs of Greece, and have now the history of the Jews mainly in view. Darius, after the reduction of Babylon, made great preparations for a war against the Scythians^e, who inhabited those countries between the Danube and the Tanais. His pretence for it was, to be revenged on them for invading Asia, and holding it in subjection twenty-eight years in the time of Cyaxares the first

^d Joseph Antiq lib. 11. cap. 4.

^e Herodot. lib. 4. cap. 1. in edit. Lond. 1679. qua utor.

first king of Media, a hundred and twenty years before this. In order to this expedition, having drawn together an army of seven hundred thousand men^f, he marched with them to the Thracian Bosphorus; and having passed over it in a bridge of boats, he brought all Thrace into subjection, and then marched to the Ister, or Danube, where he appointed his fleet, consisting mostly of Ionians and Grecians dwelling in Asia, to come to him. There he passed over another bridge of boats, into the country of the Scythians; where, having for three months time pursued them, through desert and uncultivated countries, into which they drew him by their flight, on purpose to harass and destroy his army, he was glad at last to return with one half of his men, having lost the rest in this rash and ill projected undertaking: And had not the Ionians, by the persuasion of Histæus, prince or tyrant of Miletus, contrary to the opinion of Miltiades and others, staid with the fleet to afford him a passage back, the king and the rest of the army must have perished also. Being returned to Asia, he wintered at Sardis, to refresh his broken forces, and resetttle his affairs in those parts: And fearing Hystæus, prince of Miletus, to whom he had given the territory of Myrcinus, on the river Strymon in Thrace, for his services, would enterprize some matter of moment in his absence, he carried him along with him when he marched home to Susa, in the tenth year of his reign.

Darius being desirous to enlarge his dominions to the east, he thought it proper first to make a discovery of them*. To which end, having built a fleet

^f Justin, lib. 2. cap. 5.

* Ant. Chr. 550. Darius 13.

a fleet of ships at Caspatyrus, a city on the river Indus, so far up as the borders of Scythia, he gave the command thereof to Seylax^a, a Grecian of Caria; who, according to his orders, sailed down to the mouth of that river, and returned by the Straights of Babelmandel up the Red-sea, in the thirtieth month after his setting out from Caspatyrus: He landed in Egypt, at the same place from whence Necho king of Egypt formerly sent out his Phœnicians to sail round the coasts of Africa, which seems to have been the port now called Suez; and then travelled to Susa, to give the king an account of his voyages and discoveries. After this Darius entered India with an army, and brought all that large country under him, making it the twentieth prefecture of the empire^b; from whence he yearly received a tribute of three hundred and sixty talents of gold, being one for every day in the Persian year. The money was paid according to the standard of the Euboic talent, which is near the same with the Attic, and so amounts to one million ninety-five thousand pounds Sterling of our money.

The Tyrians, after the taking of their city by Nebuchadnezzar, had been reduced to a state of servitude, under which they groaned seventy years. This term being expired, Darius restored them to their former privileges, and to have a king of their own, in consideration of the services they had done him in his naval wars. By this he accomplished the prediction of the prophet Isaiah^c. But when the Tyrians recovered their power and riches, they became proud, and were able afterwards

^a Herodot. lib. 4. cap. 44.^b Ibid. lib. 3. cap. 94, 95.^c Isa. xxiii. 15, 17. Hieronymus in Esaiam, lib. 6. cap. 23.

wards to make a greater stand against Alexander the Great, than all the Persian empire besides.

In the twentieth year of Darius's reign*, 502 years before the birth of our Saviour, Aristagoras, the son of Malpagoras, son-in-law and cousin to Histiazus, prince of Miletus, to whom he had committed the government of his country during his absence at Susa^k, with private advice from his father-in-law, formed a design to make all Ionia revolt from the Persians; and to make them stick closely together, he restored all the cities to their liberties. He went to Lacedæmon, to engage that city to his interest; but they rejected his offers. But the Athenians, being at that time offended with the Persians, for promising to support Hippias the son of Pisistratus, late tyrant there, whom they had expelled, gave Aristagoras a more favourable reception, engaging to assist him. The war being declared, the Ionians, with their allies the Athenians, sailed to Sardis; which they took. The houses being mostly of cane, were very combustible; so as one of them being set on fire by a soldier, the flames spread, till the whole city was consumed, except the castle, to which Artaphernes the Persian retired, and defended himself. Among other houses, the temple of Cybele was destroyed; for which reason the Persians pretend they afterwards demolished the Grecian temples. The Persians and Lydians gathering their forces, repulsed the Ionians, and overthrew them with a great slaughter: Whereupon the Athenians hoisted their sails to return home, and would not concern themselves any further in the war. But their

VOL. II.

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having

* Ant. Chr. 502. Darius 10.

^k Herodot. lib. 5. cap. 30.

^l Ibid. cap. 101.—108

having engaged so far gave rise to the war between the Persians and Greeks, which was carried on for several generations, to the incredible loss of both, and at last ended in the destruction of the Persian empire. Darius, on hearing of the burning of Sardis, and the share the Athenians had therein, from that time vowed a war against Greece; and that he might not forget it, he caused one of his attendants, when he was set at dinner, call, *Sir, remember the Athenians.* He having called Histæus, alledged, That though Aristagoras was at the head of the revolt, he was at the bottom of the whole: But Histæus dealt so cunningly, as not only to make Darius believe his innocency, but that the whole cause of the revolt was, that he was not at home to have hindered it; but if the king would send him to his own country in Ionia, he would not only appease these combustions, but also make other nations tributary to him: Whereupon he got liberty to leave Susa, and return to Ionia. Upon his coming, his plots and correspondence by letters were all discovered to the Persians; and himself being defeated, and chased from place to place, was at last taken prisoner; and Artaphernes and Harpagus, two Persian generals, sent him straight to Sardis to be crucified^m, without waiting for any orders from their court. Having embalmed his head, they sent it to Darius; who expressed displeasure at the authors of his death, and caused his head to be honourably buried, as a man that had merited much from him. As to Aristagoras, he finding his affairs in Asia in a bad posture, sailed for the river Strymon,

^m Herodot. lib. 6. cap. 30.

Strymon in Thrace; where he seized on the territory of Myrcinus, which Darius had formerly given to Histæus his father-in-law: But the next year thereafter, while he besieged the city, he was slain by the Thracians^a, and his whole army cut in pieces. The Persians having prevailed with the Cypriots and other allies of the Ionians to abandon them, and return to their former state, attacked Miletus, the head of the confederacy, by sea and land, took it, and utterly destroyed it; and in a short time the rest of the cities were reduced to their former yoke^b. Thus ended the Ionian revolt, in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of Darius, 495 years before the birth of Christ.

Then Darius sent Mardonius, the son of Gobrias, a young Persian nobleman, who had lately married one of his daughters, to command in chief the maritime parts of Asia, with orders to invade Greece, and revenge him on the Athenians and Eretrians, for burning of Sardis. When this general arrived at the Hellespont, he marched with his land forces through Thrace into Macedonia, ordering his fleet to coast it by sea, that they might be near, and act in concert with one another. On his arrival in Macedon, the country, dreading so great a power, submitted to him; but the fleet, as they were doubling the Cape of mount Athos, met with such a storm as destroyed three hundred ships, and above twenty thousand of their men. At the same time Mardonius lying in a camp not well secured, the Thracians broke in upon him in the night time, and slew a number of his men: By which losses he was obliged to march back again

^a Herodot. lib. 5. in fine. ^b Ant. C. 495. Darji. 27.

gain into Asia*. Darius, before he would make any further attempt upon the Grecians, sent heralds to demand earth and water^o, which was the form whereby the Persians tried who would submit to them. Several of the Grecian cities yielded to the heralds, as was required; but when they came to Athens and Sparta, they threw one of them into a well, and the other into a deep pit, bidding them fetch earth and water thence^p, though they repented of this when they came to a cooler temper, as a violation of the law of nations. Darius recalling Mardonius, sent Datis a Median, and Artaphernes a Persian, to revenge his cause on the Athenians and Eretrians. These generals rendezvoused in Ionia, an army of three hundred thousand men, and six hundred ships on the coast, with which they invaded Greece, under the guidance of Hippias, late tyrant of Athens. In the plains of Marathon, they were encountered by Miltiades, lately prince of the Thracian Chersonesus, with ten thousand Athenians, and one thousand Plataeans, and overthrown by this small number with great slaughter, and forced to sail back to Asia with disgrace. Justin^q says, "The Persians lost in this expedition two hundred thousand men by sword or shipwreck; and among them Hippias, the exciter of the war, the gods of his country taking revenge upon him." But Herodotus^r, who lived nearer that time than any historian extant, tells, "That there were only six thousand and forty Persians slain in the field of battle, and of the Athenians one hundred and ninety-two." Darius, when he heard of this defeat, was now old, yet resolved

* Ant. C. 493. Darii 29.

^o Herod. lib. 6. chap. 48. ^p Idem, lib. 7. cap. 133. ^q Lib. 2. cap. 9.^r Herodot. lib. 6 cap. 117.

solved to carry on the war in person, with greater vigour against the Athenians *. But after he had made preparations for three years, the Egyptians revolted; and before he could settle his affairs at home, and have all things in readiness for these expeditions abroad, he was seized with sickness and died, when he had reigned thirty-six years, from the creation of the world 3464, before the birth of Christ 486 years. He had abundance of success in all his undertakings, excepting these against the Scythians and Grecians; and he not only restored, and thoroughly settled the empire of Cyrus, after it had been much shaken by Cambyses and the Magians, but also added many large and rich provinces to it, especially these in Judea, Thrace, Macedon, and the isles of the Ionian sea: And what renders him more considerable, he was a prince of clemency, wisdom, and justice, and hath the honour to have his name recorded in holy writ, as a favourer of God's people, a restorer of his temple at Jerusalem, and a promoter of his worship there. For all which God was pleased to make him his instrument, and to bless him with a numerous issue, and a long reign.

§ 5. Upon his death, Xerxes his son ascended the throne †. While his father lived, there was a controversy between him and his elder brother Artabazanes, who pleaded that he was the eldest son; and therefore, according to the custom of all nations, ought to be preferred in the succession before the younger. To this Xerxes replied, That he was the son of Darius by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, the first founder of the Persian

* Ant. C. 490. Darii 32. † Ezra v. and in prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. † Ant. C. 485. Xerxis 1.

sian empire; and therefore claimed in her right to succeed to his father: And he added, That it was true Artabazanes was the eldest son of Darius, but he was the eldest son of the king; for Artabazanes was born while his father was only a private person, and therefore could claim no more but to be heir to his private fortunes. Hereon Xerxes was declared successor to the throne, tho' not so much by the strength of his plea, as by the influence which his mother Atossa had over the inclinations of Darius¹; who was governed in this matter by her. The friendly and amicable manner in which this contest was managed, was very remarkable; for during the whole time it lasted, all the marks of entire affection passed between the two contending brothers², as mutual feasting, and sending gifts. The one did not insult, and the other did not express any discontent upon the determination, but wished his brother joy in the throne; and without diminishing his affection, ever after adhered to his interest, and at last died fighting in the Grecian war for his service, which is an example rarely to be met with, when so great a prize as that of a crown is at stake.

Xerxes employed the first year of his reign in carrying on preparations³ for the reduction of Egypt, which his father had begun; he confirmed to the Jews at Jerusalem⁴ all the privileges granted them by his father, especially that of having the tribute of Samaria for furnishing them with sacrifices for the divine worship in the temple.

In the second year of his reign, he marched against

¹ Herodot. lib. 7. cap. 2, 3. ² Justin lib. 2. cap. 10. Plutarch. *πρὸς Φιλadelph. φιλίας* ³ Herod. lib. 7. cap. 2, — 6. ⁴ Joseph. Antiq. lib. 11. cap. 5.

gainst the Egyptians *, and having thoroughly subdued these revolvers †, he reduced them under a heavier yoke of servitude than they were acquainted with before; and towards the end of that year, having made Achæmenes, one of his brothers, governor, he returned to Susa; where, upon the advice and instigation of Mardonius, the son of Gobrias, he resolved on a war with Greece, and in order thereto, made great preparations for three years together, over all the provinces of the Persian empire. He entered into a league with the Carthagenians; whereby it was concluded, That while the Persians invaded Greece, the Carthagenians should invade these of the Grecian name in Sicily and Italy. Thus, as was foretold by the prophet Daniel ‡, *By his strength, and through his great riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia*; all the west under the command of Hamilcar, and all the east under his own. In the fifth year of his reign he set out from Susa, to begin the war; and having marched as far as Sardis, he wintered there.

Jeshua the son of Jozadak, high-priest of the Jews at Jerusalem, died in the fifty-third year of his priesthood; and Joiakim his son succeeded § in that office.

In the sixth year of Xerxes reign †, he passed his army over the Hellespont in seven days time, on two bridges of boats (so great was their number) to invade Greece. But the various events of this war, wherein this great prince was most unfortunate with his vast army, I shall discourse of in another part of this history, when I come to the affairs

* Ant. C. 484. Xerxes 2. † Herod. lib. 7. cap. 7. ‡ Dan. xi. 2.
 § Nehm. xii. 10. Joseph. Antiq. lib. 11. cap. 5. † Ant. C. 480. Xerxes 6.

affairs of Greece: Mean time we may remark, that Josephus^c tells us of a band of Jews that was in Xerxes army; and for this quotes some verses of the poet Chærilus, though these be questioned by some learned critics^d, yet 'tis very probable, that when Xerxes called all the other nations in the Persian empire to follow him to the war, the Jews did also bear a part in the expedition.

Before Xerxes abandoned the Greek cities, making haste towards Persia, that he might get as far as he could from his conquering enemies, he omitted not to give orders to burn and demolish all the temples of the Grecian cities in Asia^e; which was accordingly executed upon all of them, except only that of Diana in Ephesus, which alone escaped the general devastation. This he did not so much from a displeasure to the Asiatic Greeks; for he did the same in every other place he came to, destroying all images that came in his way through his whole expedition: But it proceeded mainly from his zeal for the Magian religion, in which he had been thoroughly instructed, and made a zealous profelyte by the famous Zoroastres^f: For that sect expressed a great detestation against worshipping God by images, because says Cicero^g, "God cannot be included within walls; all things are open before him, and the whole world is his temple." To keep Xerxes firm to their party, not only several doctors of the Magians, but also Ostanes himself, then the Archimagus

^c Joseph contra Appionem lib. 1. ^d See Prideaux, Connect part 1. p. 234. Usserii Annales, pag. m. 95. ^e Strabo, lib. 14. p. 634. Cleero de legibus, lib. 2. cap. 26. Hieronym in Esaiam, cap. 37. ^f Of him, and of the Persian idolatry, see the Propagation of Christianity, chap. 2. ^g De legibus, lib. 2. § 26.

magus^a, or great patriot of the whole sect, accompanied him as his chaplains wherever he marched, and by their instigation all these temples were destroyed. On his return towards Susa, Xerxes passed through Babylon, and there made the same desolation of the temples as he had done in Greece, and other parts of Asia^b, as it may be supposed on the same principle, that is, zeal for the Magian religion, and his aversion to the Sabians, who worshipped God by images, which the Magians abhorred. For the Babylonians were all Sabians, and indeed the first founders of this sect; for they first brought in the worship of the planets, and afterwards that of images, and from thence propagated it to all other nations where it obtained. For this reason the Magians having them in abhorrence above all other Sabians, easily prevailed with Xerxes to take Babylon on his way to Susa, on purpose to destroy all the temples they had there, and perhaps to recruit himself with the spoils, after the vast expence he had been at in the Grecian war. For the wealth and treasures of these temples were very great, being the collection of the riches of many people for a great many ages. By the pillaging and demolishing all the idolatrous temples at Babylon, was fully completed what the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah had foretold long before^c, *That Babylon is fallen, and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken to the ground. I will punish Bel at Babylon; and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up; the days come that I will do judgments upon*

VOL. II. Fff

^a Diogenes Laertius in præmio, Suidas in voce *μαγος*. ^b Strabo, lib. 16. p. m. 736. Diodor. Siculus, lib. 11. cap. 29. ^c Isa. xxi. 9. Jer. li. 44, 47, 51. Jer. l. 2.

the graven images of Babylon. Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces, her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For when Xerxes destroyed all the temples in Babylon, he took from them all their treasures which they had been devouring, and pulling down all the images that were in them, broke them to pieces, converting the gold and silver of which they were made, to all these common uses he had occasion for.

Xerxes finding no hopes to retrieve the losses he had sustained in Greece, spent the remainder of his time in Persia, where he abandoned himself to luxury, ease, and all manner of vice; acting some cruel tragedies on the house of Masiestes his brother, and upon others, minding principally how to gratify his lusts and pleasures, and so did grow into contempt with his people. This encouraged Artabanus, the captain of his guards, and one who had been long in prime favour and authority with him, to conspire against him; and having drawn Mithridates his chamberlain, and one of his eunuchs into the plot, by his means got into his chamber, and there slew him while he slept in his bed¹: Then going to Artaxerxes his third son, acquainted him that his father was killed, and accused Darius his elder brother as the murderer, telling him he had done it, to make way to the throne, and that he would next cut him off to secure himself in it; and therefore it was needful to look to himself. Artaxerxes being then young, believing all this to be true; and being irritated thereby, he went immediately to his brother's apartment, and there, by the

assist.

¹ Diodor. Siculus, lib. xx. cap. 69. Justin, lib. iii. cap. 1. Ctesia fragment. in annexis Herodot. p. 346.

assistance of Artabanus and his guards, flew him ; which he did, as he was informed, by way of just revenge of the death of his father, and for his own safety, being deceived by the craft of the traitor who excited him. The next heir was Hytaspes the second son of Xerxes, but he being absent in Bactria, of which province he was governor, Artabanus took Artaxerxes, as being next at hand, and put him on the throne ; but with a design to let him sit no longer, than till he had formed a party strong enough to seize it for himself. For he having been long in great authority, had made many creatures ; and he had seven sons, all men of robust bodies, and advanced to great dignities in the empire ; and his confidence put his ambition on this design : But while he was hastening it to a conclusion, Artaxerxes having got a full discovery of the whole plot by the means of Megabyfes, who had married one of his sisters, was before-hand with him in a counter-plot, whereby he killed Artabanus, and arrested his sons before their treason was ripened for execution. Thus he secured himself in the possession of the kingdom, which he held forty-one years. Xerxes reigned twenty-one years, and was killed in the year of the world 3486, before our Saviour's birth 464.

§ 6. Artaxerxes being fixed upon his throne, was by the Greeks called *Μακροχειρ*, and by the Latins Longimanus, by reason of the more than ordinary length of his hands ; for they were so long, that on his standing upright he could touch his knees with them. He had several difficulties to struggle with ; for though Artabanus was dead, he had left behind him seven sons now at liberty, and

and many partizans, who immediately gathered together to revenge his death, whereon a fierce conflict ensued between them, and those who stood by Artaxerxes, in which many noble Persians were slain. But at length Artaxerxes having prevailed, cut off all those who were concerned in the conspiracy; and especially he took signal revenge^m of every one of those who had any hand in the murder of his father, and particularly on the eunuch Mithridates who had betrayed him, whom he caused to be put to death by cruel torments. He had more difficulty with his brother Hystaspes, governor of Bactria, who levied an army against him, and in the first battle stood his ground. But Artaxerxes having far the greater part of Persia at his devotion, drew together a much stronger army, and utterly overthrew his brother in a second battleⁿ. Then he removed all these governors of cities and provinces, of whom he had the least suspicion, and put in their places such as he had a thorough confidence in, managing his affairs so as to establish himself in the affections of his people, which is the great interest of princes.

Having settled himself in the full possession of the whole Persian empire, he appointed a solemn rejoicing on this accounts, and caused it to be celebrated in the city Shushan or Susa with feasting and solemn shews for one hundred and eighty days^o : On conclusion of which he made a solemn feast to all, great and small, that were at Shushan, for seven days; and Vashti the queen made the like entertainment for the women. On the seventh

^m Ctesias fragmen. in annexis ad Herod. p. 646. ⁿ Diodor. Sicul. lib. II. cap. 71. ^o Esther i. 3. 4. * Ant. C. 462. Artax. 3.

seventh day, the king's heart being merry, he commanded Vashti to be brought, with the crown on her head, to shew to the princes and people her beauty : But she refused to come. The king being incensed, called his counsellors to take advice with them about it ; who fearing this might be of ill example over the whole empire, to encourage women to disobey their husbands, advised the king to put away Vashti for ever from him, to give her royal state to another, and that every man should bear rule in his own house^p ; which was agreed to, and a decree concerning it registered among the laws of the Medes and Persians. After this, orders were given out over the whole empire, for gathering together to the palace at Shushan four virgins in every province, that out of them one might be chosen whom the king should best like to be queen instead of Vashti.

At the time when this collection of virgins was made, there lived at Shushan a certain Jew named Mordecai^q, of the descendants of those who had been carried captive to Babylon with Jeconiah king of Judah, and, by his attendance at the king's gate, seems to have been one of the porters at the royal palace. He having no children, bred up Hadassah (that is, Esther) his uncle's daughter, and adopted her for his own. This young woman being very beautiful and fair, was made choice of among other virgins on this occasion, and was carried to the royal palace, and there committed to the care of Hegai the king's chamberlain, who was appointed to have the custody of those virgins ; whom she pleased so well by her good carriage,

^p Esther i. 11.—23.

^q Esther ii. 5.—17.

riage, as he shewed her favour before all the other virgins under his care, assigning her the best apartment of the house, and providing her first with those things necessary for her purification: Wherefore she was one of the first that was called to the king's bed. The king was so well pleased with her, that he often called her by name, which he used not to do but to those only of his women whom he most delighted in*. From this time she seems to have had the name of Esther; for it is of a Persian original, and the signification thereof is not now known.

It is most probable, that it was this Esther, who was afterwards queen to Artaxerxes Longimanus: For Josephus† positively tells it was so; and the Septuagint, through the book of Esther, where the Hebrew text hath Ahasuerus, translate it Artaxerxes; and the Apocryphal additions to that book every where call the husband of Esther, Artaxerxes; who could be no other than Artaxerxes Longimanus: For there are many circumstances related concerning him, both in Canonical and Apocryphal Esther, which can by no means be applicable to Artaxerxes Mnemon; and the extraordinary favour and kindness which Artaxerxes Longimanus shewed the Jews, beyond all the other kings who reigned in Persia, first in sending Ezra, and afterwards Nehemiah, to repair their broken affairs in Judah and Jerusalem, cannot be accounted for on any other reason, but that he had in his bosom such a powerful advocate as Esther to solicit for them; and 'tis no way agreeable to the character of Hamestris queen to Xerxes,

* Ant. O. 460. Artax. 3. † Jos. ph. Antiq. lib. xi. cap. 6.

Xerxes, predecessor to Longimanus, that she should be the Esther spoken of in sacred scripture; notwithstanding the similitude of their names. For we find that this Hamestris having some jealousy or prejudice at the wife of Masistes; brother to the king her husband, and having got her into her power, she caused her breasts, tongue, nose, ears and lips to be cut off, and thrown to the dogs before her face; and sent her home thus mangled to her husband's house. Masistes being highly exasperated at this barbarous usage, made haste to get together all his family, servants and dependents, and march to Bactria, of which province he was governor, purposing there to make war against the king. But Xerxes suspecting the matter, sent a party of horse after him; who overtook him on the road, cut him off, with his wife, children, and all that belonged to him, as is more fully related by Herodote¹. And the same author² tells, that the said Hamestris caused fourteen boys of the best families in Persia to be buried alive, as a sacrifice to the infernal Gods. By which acts it appeared that Hamestris was a cruel heathenish woman, most unlike to Esther a Jewess, the happy instrument by whom God was pleased in so signal a manner to deliver his people from that utter destruction that was designed against them. To go on with our history:

The Egyptians being very impatient of a foreign yoke, rebelled against Artaxerxes, making Inarus prince of the Libyans their king; and called in the Athenians to their assistance. Artaxerxes being informed of this revolt, raised an army

¹ Herodot. lib. 2. cap. 107.—113.

² Mem. lib. 7. cap. 114.

my of three hundred thousand men, whom he committed to the conduct of Achæmenides, one of his brethren^a; But the Athenians having defeated the Persian fleet at sea, landed their army; and having joined the Egyptians, defeated the Persians at land with a great slaughter. Achæmenides himself being killed, and the remainder were besieged in Memphis for three years, till at length they were succoured by those sent for their relief.

In the seventh year of Artaxerxes, Ezra obtained of this king and of his chief counsellors a very ample commission^a, for his return to Jerusalem, with all his nation who were willing to accompany him, giving him full authority there to restore and settle the state, to reform the church of the Jews, and to regulate and govern both according to their own laws^b. This extraordinary favour not having been likely to have been obtained but by some more than ordinary means, seems to have been granted at the solicitation of Esther, who was now the best beloved of the king's concubines; though not yet advanced to the dignity of a queen. For it was usual for the kings of Persia, on some particular occasions, to allow their women to ask favours^c. And upon such occasion 'tis probable Esther, at the direction of Mordecai, asked this of the king. This Ezra was of the descendants of Seraiah the high-priest, who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar when he burnt the temple and city of Jerusalem. Though he seems not to have been his immediate son, because of the distance of time in which Ezra lived; yet he might have come of Seraiah in a straight line. Thus Azariah

VIII

is

^a Orosius Fragments, p. 647.

^b Herodot. lib. 9. cap. 108.

^c Ant. C. 458. Ezra vii.

Is said to have been the son of Maraioth; though there were six between them*. As Ezra was a very holy man, so he was also very learned; being particularly well skilled in the holy scriptures; and therefore he is said to have been a *ready scribe in the law of God*; for which he was so eminent, that Artaxerxes takes particular notice of it in his commission*. He began his journey from Babylon on the fifth day of the first month, called Nisan, which might fall about the middle of our March; and having halted at the river Ahava till the rest of his company were come up to him, he there in a solemn fast recommended himself and all that were with him to the divine protection, and on the twelfth day set forward to Jerusalem; where they all safely arrived on the first of the fifth month*, having spent four months in their journey from Babylon thither. On his arrival at the temple, he delivered for the service thereof all the offerings that had been made to that end by the king and his nobles, and by the rest of the people of Israel who staid behind, which amounted to one hundred talents of gold, and six hundred and fifty talents of silver; also twenty basons of gold, of 1000 drams or daries, (which Dr. Prideaux* computeth to be the value of one of our Jacobus's) and silver vessels one hundred talents: And then having communicated his commission to the king's lieutenants and governors through all Syria and Palestine, he betook himself to execute the contents thereof, whereby he was fully empowered to settle both the church and state of the Jews according to the law of Moses, and

VOL. II.

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to

* Compare Ezra vii. 3. with 1 Chron. vi. 7, 8, 9. * Ezra vii. 11, 12.
 b. Ezra viii. 31. c. Ezra vii. 9. d. Connection, part 1. p. 261.

to appoint magistrates and judges to punish all such as should be refractory, and that not only with imprisonment and confiscation of goods, but also with banishment and death. All this Ezra did faithfully perform for the space of thirteen years, till Nehemiah arrived with a new commission from the Persian court for the same work.

Esther growing further still in the king's favour, and gaining his affection beyond all the rest of his women, in the tenth month of this year he did put the royal crown upon her head, making her queen instead of Vashti, and then made a solemn feast for his princes and servants, which was called Esther's feast; and in honour of her at the same time made a release of taxes to the provinces, and gave donatives and presents to all that then attended, according to the grandeur of his royal estate. This gave Ezra the greater encouragement under her patronage to go on with the work of reforming and settling the church and state in Judea and at Jerusalem, which he had then undertaken.

From the beginning of Ezra's entering on this work, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, commenceth the seventy weeks, contained in that excellent prophecy concerning the Messiah, which we have in the ninth chapter of Daniel, from the twenty-fourth, to the twenty-seventh verse. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the*

most

most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment, to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks; and threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war, desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. Many learned men having writ at large upon this prediction, a few remarks may suffice at the time to set it in a true light. First, It is to be observed, that the prophecy relates especially to the Jews; for it expresseth the time that was determined upon the people of Daniel, (that is, the Jews) and upon the holy city, (that is, Jerusalem) the whole of which was seventy weeks; for this was the time God had fore-ordained upon the Jews for their being his peculiar people, and upon Jerusalem for its being his holy city: After the expiration of which, an end being put to the Mosaic oconomy, they should be no longer God's peculiar people; and the worship which he had established at Jerusalem being to be abolished, that city should be no longer a holy city unto him.

Secondly, These seventy weeks, are weeks of years, a day being put for a year⁶, and a week for seven years. Among the Jews, there were sabbatical

⁶ Ezek. iv. 6.

bathical years; whereby their years were divided into weeks of years. So that every one of the weeks in this prophecy contains seven years, and the whole seventy weeks, or seventy times seven years, contain four hundred and ninety years; at the end whereof, this determined time expired.

Thirdly, This was accomplished at the death of Christ: For then the Jewish church and worship at Jerusalem being abolished, and the Christian church and worship succeeding in their stead, then the time determined upon the Jews for their being God's peculiar people, and upon Jerusalem for its being his holy city being fully expired, from thence began the kingdom of the Messiah; and instead of the Jews, all nations of the world were called thereunto, and instead of Jerusalem, every place through the whole earth, where God should be worshipped in spirit and truth, was made holy unto him. Then therefore the seventy weeks have their ending, and all the events in this prophecy were then by the death and resurrection of Christ accomplished. He who was the most holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners was then *anointed*, being fully qualified, as our prophet, priest, and king. He did *finish transgression, make an end of sins, and reconciliation for iniquity*. He died to satisfy the justice of God fully for our sin, to pardon, blot out, mortify and expiate all kinds and sorts of sin, and to reconcile us to God. He *brings in everlasting righteousness*. He hath provided this righteousness for us who are unrighteous and guilty sinners, he hath merited it by his death, he offers it in the gospel, and applies it by working

faith

faith in us by his holy Spirit. This is everlasting righteousness; for our Redeemer, *Jehovah* our righteousness, is an everlasting Father: It is from everlasting in the counsels of God, and it will be everlasting in its consequences and blessings. *He hath sealed up the vision and prophecy*: He hath accomplished all the prophetic visions in the Old Testament, which concern the Messiah, and hath answered them to a tittle.

Fourthly, The end of these weeks being thus fixed at the death of Christ, this doth necessarily determine us where to place the beginning of them, even 490 years before. Therefore the death of Christ, as most learned chronologers^b agree, falling in the year of the Julian period 4746, in the Jewish month Nisan, at the time of the passover; if we reckon 490 years backwards, this will lead us up to the month Nisan, in the year of the Julian period 4256, which was the same month and year in which Ezra had his commission^c from Artaxerxes Longimanus king of Persia, to return to Jerusalem, and there to restore the church and state of the Jews, Nisan being the first month in the Jewish calendar. Or thus: From the year of the creation of the world 3492, which was the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, to the year from the creation of the world 3982, in which Christ suffered death^d, are just 490 years. Again, if we reckon by Dr Usher's calculation of years of the world, from 3546, wherein the decree was given, to 4036, when our Lord died, intervene 490: So that though the learned primate differ from us in

^b Scaliger, de emendatione temporum, lib. 6. p. 562. Usserius in annalibus sub anno J. P. 4746. Strachill brevium chronologicum. Helvici Theatrum, &c. ^c Ezra, vii. 8, 9. ^d See Helvicus's Chronological Tables.

fixing the date of this prophecy, yet his calculation of years, whether by the Julian period, or by the years of the world, confirms our opinion. Upon the whole, by any of these calculations, the seventy weeks begin with this decree of Artaxerxes to restore and build Jerusalem, and end with Christ's death.

Fifthly, These weeks must have their beginning from the date of the commission granted to Ezra, because they are pinned down thereto by an express character in the text, Dan. ix. 25. *From the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem*: Thence have the seventy weeks their beginning; and to incite us the more to observe it, he introduceth it with this preface, *Know therefore and understand*. To restore and to build Jerusalem, is not to be understood literally, but figuratively, for restoring the state of the Jews, as well political as ecclesiastical, and the resettling of both according to the law of Moses; for the doing whereof, the commission given to Ezra was very full, which he did accordingly execute.

Sixthly, The beginning of the seventy weeks, from the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, when the decree was given to Ezra to restore and build Jerusalem, and ending them with the death of Christ, does well agree with the chronology of the Jews and other nations, as is already proved; and the particulars may appear from the chronological tables of Helvicus or Mr Talents, Dr. Owen's Prolegomina, or Exercitationes prefixed to the first volume of his Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews^m, and others. And since it so exactly corresponds with this calculation, it cannot agree

¹ Vide Usserii Annales; in editione Genev. 1722, p. 105 & 594. ^m p. 187.

agree with the beginning and end of theſe weeks at any other period of time, as is at large demonſtrated by the learned Dr. Prideaux^a, whom the curious reader may conſult.

As to the particular diviſion of the time in theſe ſeventy weeks: *From the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and build Jeruſalem, there are ſeven weeks: and the ſtreet ſhall be built again, and the wall (or ditch) in troublous times; that is, forty-nine years ſhall be employed in reſtoring and eſta bliſhing the church and ſtate of the Jews. And accord ingly, from the commandment or decree given by Artaxerxes Longimanus to Ezra, to reſtore and build Jeruſalem, in the ſeventh year of the ſaid king's reign, to the ending and perfecting of it by Nehemiah^b, in the laſt act of his reformation, were forty-nine years, as ſhall afterwards appear, the work being hindered and delayed ſo long, by the oppoſition made by the Samaritans and other enemies abroad, and by falſe brethren at home. And at the ſame juncture of time where the re ſtoration of the Jewiſh church and ſtate ended; there the holy ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament conclude alſo. After theſe ſeven weeks, or forty nine years, if we reckon ſixty-two weeks, or 434 years more, this will lead us down to the coming of the Meſſiah: For the words of the prophecy are, *From the going forth of the commandment to re ſtore and build Jeruſalem, unto the Meſſiah, the Prince, ſhall be ſeven weeks, and threescore and two weeks^c; that is, There ſhall be ſeven weeks for completing and finiſhing the work for which the decree was granted, and from thence ſixty-two weeks more to the coming of the Meſſiah here intended; that**

is,

^a Connexion, vol. i p m 169, — 189. ^b Neh. xiii 23, — 31. ^c P. Dan ix 25.

is, to the time of his first appearance in the ministry of the gospel: For if we reckon, from the year of the Julian period 4236, when the decree was given, sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, this will lead us down to the year of the Julian period 4739, which was the year in which our blessed Lord began the ministry of the gospel; and in three years and a half more; that is, in the midst of the week, the Messiah was cut off, and thereby did confirm the covenant, fulfilling the end of the ceremonial law, with all the sacrifices, and making them of no more use. Then follows the last part of the prophecy: *And the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate.* This, as our Lord says, is the *abomination spoken of by Daniel the prophet*, even the Roman armies that should invade Judah as a flood, and by a terrible consuming war should bring utter ruin upon it, consummating the same in an absolute destruction of the inhabitants of the land; all which did accordingly come to pass, as we shall afterwards hear. Sir John Marsham¹ is here justly to be blamed, for explaining this whole prophecy without any regard to our Lord Jesus, and terminating the whole in the persecution raised against the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes. He is followed by the author of *the Grounds of the Christian Religion*; but his notion is overturned by the grounds we have already insisted upon: Only I fear it be-
coming of the Messiah here intended a wil-

¹ Helvici Theatrum, p. m. 84. ² Matth xxiv. 15. ³ Canon Chroni-
 cat, Sec. 18. p. m. 414. — 720. ⁴ See Scheme of Literal Prophecy, print-
 ed 1726, p. 163, — 192.

a wilful mistake in that learned author, to throw up such a prediction, which our Lord^a himself hath applied to New Testament times. But what hath been advanced, may suffice at the time to shew that this illustrious prophecy is accomplished in our blessed Lord Jesus, who is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. To go on with the history:

Ezra having found, in the second year of his government, that many of the Jews had taken strange wives, contrary to the law^{*}; and that many of the priests and Levites, as well as other men in Judah and Benjamin, had transgressed in this matter; after he had by fasting and prayer deprecated the wrath of God for this crying sin, he caused proclamation to be made, that all the people of Israel, who had returned from the captivity, might gather themselves together at Jerusalem, under the penalty of excommunication and forfeiture of all their goods: And when they were met, he made them sensible of their folly, and engaged them in a covenant and promise before God to depart from it, by putting away their strange wives, and all such as were born of them, that the seed of Israel might not be polluted with such an undue^{*} commixture. And thereon commissioners were appointed to examine into this matter, and to cause every man to do according to the law. They sat down the first day of the tenth month, to examine this affair, and made an end by the first day of the first month; so that in three months time, that is, in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth months of the Jewish year, a thorough

VOL. II.

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reforma-

^a Matth. xxiv. 15.

^{*} Ant. C. 457. Artak. 8.

^{*} Ezra ix. and x.

reformation was made of this transgression; which three months answer to January, February and March, in our year. This makes it evident that the books of Moses were then extant, and that Ezra could not have altered them; for Ezra himself, in the iiii chapter of his book, ver. 2,—5. almost in express terms affirms, that Jeshua, the son of Josedek, and Zerubbabel, brought with them the writings of Moses from Babylon, in the first year of Cyrus; and we find, in Ezra vi. 18,—21. that they offered sacrifices, and kept solemn feasts according to the law of Moses. Moreover, when these precepts, concerning marriages, were so plainly broken by the Jews, expressly against the law of Moses, in which transgression their *princes and rulers were chief*, Ezra ix. 1, 2. wherein the affection of their wives, and the interest of their families was nearly concerned, which would oblige them to examine all the copies of the law which Ezra could offer; yet we find that they were so far from opposing Ezra's command in this matter, that they confessed their trespasses, and abandoned the strange wives they had taken with their children.

About this time Bigthan and Tereſh^v, two eunuchs in the palace, entered into a conspiracy against the life of King Artaxerxes. 'Tis probable they were of these who had attended Queen Vashti, and being now out of their office, by degrading their mistress, they took disgust so as to resolve to revenge themselves on the king; of which Mordecai having got knowledge, he made discovery thereof to Queen Esther, and she, in Mordecai's

name,

^v Esther ii. 21,—23.

name, to the king; whereon enquiry being made into the matter, and the whole treason laid open, the two traitors were both crucified for it, and the history of the whole entered on the public records and annals of the kingdom.

Megabyzus and Artabazus, who were appointed by Artaxerxes to command in the Egyptian war², drew together into Cilicia and Phœnicia, an army of three hundred thousand men for that expedition; but wanting a fleet, they tarried most of this year while it was preparing, carefully instructing their soldiers in the art of war, which contributed not a little to the victory which they afterwards obtained. Next year the Persian fleet, commanded by Artabazus, being ready, sailed for the Nile³; and at the same time Megabyzus marched the army by land to Memphis, raised the siege of that place, joined the besieged, and gave battle to Inarus with his Egyptians and Athenian auxiliaries, whom he overthrew with a great slaughter, which chiefly fell upon the Egyptian revolters; for about this time the auxiliaries capitulated upon terms to return home; which the Persians, having experienced their valour, easily granted. The remains of the vanquished army retired to a place of safety, and the rest of the Egyptians, after this blow, submitted all to the conquerors, and returned to the obedience of Artaxerxes.

Joachim the high-priest of the Jews being dead, was succeeded by Eliashib his son⁴, who bore that office forty years†.

INDEX.

² Diod. Sicul. lib. 11. cap. 75,—78. Ctésiaz Frag. in annexis ad Herod. p. 647, 648. ³ Neh. xii. 10. Joseph. Antiq. lib. 11. cap. 5. p. 452.

⁴ Ant. C. 456, Artax. 9.

† Ant. C. 458. Artax. 12.

I N D E X.

A.

- A**BDON, a judge in Israel, 56
- Abimelech kills seventy sons of Gideon, is a plague to his country, is killed, 51, 52
- Abijah, king of Judah, his life, 191
- Abner the son of Ner, his actions, 99. Is murdered, 100
- Abradatas, prince of Shushan, revolts to Cyrus. Of his death, and of Panthea his wife, 340,—342
- Abfalom caused kill Amnon, 113. Rebels against his father, 115. Is defeated and killed by Joab, 120
- Adonijah prepares to succeed king David, is pardoned, 133. Seeks Abisbag in marriage, and is put to death, 142.
- Ahab, king of Israel, 200, &c.
- Ahaz, king of Judah, his wicked reign, 258,—262. His death, 262
- Ahaziah, son of Ahab, his life and death, 217,—219
- Ahaziah, king of Judah, his reign, 236
- Amalek fights against Israel, but is defeated, 79
- Amaziah, king of Judah, his reign, 245
- Ammonites oppress Israel, are overcome by Jephthah, 53,—55
- Amnon, king of Judah, his wicked reign, his death, 285
- Amos, his time and prophecies, 251
- Anakims destroyed by Joshua, 22
- Angel, or Messenger of the covenant, a title given to our Redeemer in his Old Testament appearances, 12, 46, 57
- Apries, or Pharaoh-hopra. Zedakiah makes confederacies with him, 311. Is deceived by him, 313. He is slain, 327
- Apronadius, king of Babylon, 279
- Argonauts, their time, story of their expedition, 159
- Archons in Athens, 200

Ark

Ark of the covenant, Dagon falls before it, 68. David brings it to Jerusalem, 102. Ark in the second temple wanted the prerogatives it had in the first, 365

Arkianus, king of Babylon, 226

Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, cuts off the murderers of his father, 407, 408. Puts away Vashti his queen; his army is routed in Egypt, 409, 412. He sends Ezra to govern and settle the affairs of the Jews, 412. Overcomes the Egyptians, 423

B.

Baalim, idols so named, 34. Priests of Baal killed, 210, 240. Baal-berith, an idol deity, 51

Baasha, king of Israel, his life and death, 198

Babylon, an account of its walls, temple, hanging gardens, &c. 328,—331. The city taken by Cyrus, its empire ended; how long it continued, prophecies fulfilled, 344,—346. Rebels against Darius. The cruelty of its inhabitants. Is taken, 390, 391.

Babylonish captivity, when it began, 299. Ended, 349, 350

Baruch employed by Jeremiah to publish his prophecies, 297

Baruch, the book so named, shown to be apocryphal, 309

Belshazzar, last monarch of Babylon, 339

Benhadad, king of Syria, his descent, 200. Benhadad II. 213. Benhadad III. 231

Benjamites, their war with the tribes of Israel, 38, 39

Bethshemesh, the men there smitten for looking into the ark, 1 Sam. vi. 19 explained, 69, 70

Bigthan and Teresh, their conspiracy punished, 422

C.

Caleb, his lot in Canaan, 24, 25, 32

Calves at Dan and Bethel, 185. Carried to Assyria, 263

Cambyzes, king of Persia, succeeds his father Cyrus, 378.

Makes war against Egypt with success, 379. His army marching to Ethiopia, almost destroyed; kills the god Apis, does bad things, 381. His death, 382

Canaan, that land conquered. Remarks on the conquests, 22, 23. Divided among the tribes of Israel, 25

Canaanites

Canaanites destroyed, the remainder of them flee to neighbouring countries, 22.

Canon of Ptolemy, 269.

Chronology of the fourth period, 149. Questions, 150,

—155. Incident chronologic difficulties, 43, 195, 219,

236, 244, 247, 266, 296, 303, 322, 355. The chrono-

logy of the kingdom of the ten tribes, 265. Of the

kings of Judah, 299. Chronology of period sixth, 349,

—351. The sum of the periods before the birth of

Christ, 351. The chronology of Daniel's 70 week's

414, —417.

Circumcised (Israel) at their entering Canaan, 11.

Cities of refuge named by Joshua, 27.

Corybantes, priests of Cybele, 158.

Croesus succeeds his father in Lydia, 333. Commands the

Babylonian army, is routed by Cyrus, 337. Deceived

by oracles; his army put to flight; taken prisoner; his

dumb son's saying when condemned; he is spared by

Cyrus, 341, 342.

Cushan Rishathaim oppresseth Israel, 34.

Cyaxares, king of Media, succeeds his father as king of

Media, is defeated by the Scythians, 286, 287. His

death, 310.

Cyaxares II. son of Astyages, king of Media, 333. Calls

Cyrus to his assistance, 336. Is named Darius the Mede,

345. Takes the kingdom, dies, 347.

Cyrus, afterwards king of Persia, his birth, 306. Hero-

dote's account of him seems fabulous; Xenophon rather

to be credited, 334, 335. Surprises the king of Armenia,

routs the Chaldean army, 337. Defeats Croesus, 342,

Besieges and takes Babylon, 343, 344. The number of

his forces; he gives liberty to the Jews to return to their

own land, 348, 349. His death, 377.

D.

Dagon falls before the ark, 68. House of Dagon pulled

down by Samson, 62.

Danaus's fifty daughters murder their husbands, 161.

Daniel the prophet carried prisoner to Babylon, 298. In-

terprets

- interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dreams, and is advanced, 302. His eminent piety, 311. His visions and prophecies, 340,—345. Is delivered from the den of lions, 348. His great age, book, death, and character, 373,—377. His prophecy of 70 weeks explained, 414,—417.
- Darius, son of Hystaspes, chosen king of Persia, 383. Forwards the re-building the temple at Jerusalem, 385,—388. Reduces the Babylonians who had revolted, 390. His war against the Scythians, 394. Extends his dominions towards India; restores the Tyrians to their privileges, 396. Puts an end to the Ionian revolt; is unsuccessful against Greece. His death, 401.
- David anointed by Samuel, 80. Made Saul's armour-bearer, 81. Kills Goliath, 82. Is persecuted by Saul, 84,—100. Anointed king at Hebron; the sacred history concerning him; his wars; the treasures he left for the building of the temple; his piety and death explained, 98,—141.
- Dejoces, first king of the Medes, enlarges Ecbatana, 276. Is overthrown in battle, 283.
- Deucalion, the story of his deluge, 157.
- Division of Canaan among the tribes by Joshua, 24. The use of this sacred geography, *ibid.*

E.

- Ecclesiastes, the scope thereof, when writ by Solomon, 183.
- Eglon, king of Moab, oppresseth Israel, killed by Ehud, 40.
- Elah, the son of Baasha, reigns in Israel, his death, 198, 199.
- Eli the high-priest judgeth Israel. His sons wicked, 63,—66. His sons killed. Eli dies, 67.
- Elijah, the Tishbite, his life and miracles, 206. His sacrifice at Carmel, 210. His translation to heaven, 222.
- Elishah the prophet called to his office, 212. Miraculous things done by him, 225,—237. His death and burial, 244.
- Eliashib, the high-priest, 423.
- Elon a judge in Israel, 56.

Encamp-

- Encampment of Joshua, 10
 Esarhaddon succeeds his father Sennacherib, 276. Takes
 Babylon. Is called The noble Asnapper, 280. His
 death, 283
 Esther, queen to Artaxerxes I. king of Persia 410, &c.
 Evil-merodach reigns at Babylon, and relieves Jehoiachin
 out of prison, 332. His reign and death, 333
 Ezekiel the prophet carried into captivity, 305. Called
 to his office. His prophecies and visions, 310. Pro-
 phesies against Egypt and Tyre, 314, 315. Of gospel
 mysteries, 325
 Ezra, his commission from Artaxerxes to go to Jerusalem.
 His descent, learning and journey, 412. Puts away
 strange wives from the Jews, 421

F.

- Fasts of the Jews, 316. Turned to joy and gladness, 389.
 These fasts enumerated, *ibid.*

G.

- Ganymede his rape, 158
 Gedaliah is made governor of Judea, and is killed by Ish-
 mael, son of Nethaniah, 318, 319
 Gerizzim, the law read from that mountain, 16
 Giants, David in danger by one, 125
 Gibeonites enter into a league with Joshua, 17. A famine
 for Saul's killing them, 124
 Gideon delivers Israel from the Midjanites, 46. His mili-
 tary execution on the men of Succoth and Penuel, 49.
 His ephod, 50
 Goliath, a giant killed by David, 82

H.

- Habakkuk, of his prophecy, 279
 Haggai, his prophecies, 385
 Hezekiah, king of Judah, promotes reformation, and keeps
 the passover, 267. Makes war on the Philistines, reco-
 vers of the pestilence, 269,—271. Makes peace with
 Assyria.

Assyria. Sennacherib's army destroyed, 275. Hezekiah's works, death and burial, 277

I.

Jabin, king of Canaan, oppresses Israel, 41

Jair, a judge in Israel, 52

Ihzan judges Israel, 56

Idæi Dactyli, the fable concerning them, 58

Idolatry of the Danites, 37

Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, several dates of his reign.

He kills his brethren. Elijah's letter to him; his death, 219,—221

Jehoram, the son of Ahab, reigns in Samaria, 214. Defeats the revolting Moabites, 216. Is killed, 235

Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, reigns in Samaria, 244

Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, unlike his father, is carried captive, 294, 295

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, his piety, 201. His alliance with Ahab, 202. He dies, 205

Jehu, the son of Hanani, reproves Jehoshaphat, 304

Jehu, the son of Nimshi, anointed king, 237. Cuts off the house of Ahab and priests of Baal. Dies, 240. How long his race continued, 254, &c.

Jehoiada, a pious high-priest, crowns Joash, 242. Dies, 243

Jehoiakim is made king of Judah, follows evil example, 295. Is taken prisoner and made tributary to the Babylonians, 279. Is worse under his calamities, 300. Rebels against the king of Babylon, is taken prisoner and slain, 302, 303

Jehoiachin his son, succeeds, does evil, and is carried in chains to Babylon, 303. Is released and promoted to honour, 332

Jephthah delivers Israel from oppression. Of Jephthah's daughter, and his death, 55

Jericho attacked and destroyed. A curse pronounced on him that shall re-build it, 12. The prediction verified on Hiel, 14

Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, first king over the ten tribes,

sets up the golden calves, 185. The prediction of the man of God against him, 186. Other particulars of his life and death, 190.

Jeroboam II. son of Joash, his reign, 246, 247, 254

Jeremiah called to the prophetic office, 287. Mourns for the death of Josiah, 294. Prophecies against Jehoiakim, 295. Prophecies of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion; is imprisoned. Baruch reads the roll, 297, 298. Prophecies against Jehoiachin, 303. Against Elam and the Jews who remained in the land. Writes to the Jews in Babylon, 306, 307. Prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem, is cast into prison, put in the dungeon, pulled out by Ebedmelech, 312,—315. Well used by Nebuchadnezzar, 317. Is carried to Egypt, prophecies against the Jews there. Conjectures about his death, 320, 321

Jeremiah's prophecies of 70 years; how fulfilled, 349, 391

Jerusalem, Adonizedek king there, 17. David gains it from the Jebusites, brings the ark thither, 101,—103. Made to flee from it by Absalom, 116. Solomon builds the temple there, 170. Shishak makes himself master of it, 188. Taken in the reign of Ahaz, 259. Repaired by Hezekiah, 277. Called Cadytis, 294. Taken by Nebuchadnezzar, 279. Again taken and burnt, 215, 216. Its distance from Babylon, 387.

Jeshua, son of Jozadak, high-priest of the Jews, 353. His death, 403.

Jews, their numbers who returned from Babylon; the poorest returned, 356. Their contributions for re-building the temple, 300. Xerxes confirms decrees in their favours 402

Joab murders Abner 100, and Amasa, 123. Numbers the people, 129. Is put to death, 142.

Joash make king of Judah when seven years old, 241. Repairs the temple, serves idols after the death of Joizda. Is killed 243

Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz reigns in Israel, 244

Jonadab, the son of Rehab, 239

Jonah the prophet, 247, 253.

Jonathan, the son of Saul, he and his armour-bearer kill the

the Philistines, 77. His friendship to David, 85. He is killed, 97

Joshua takes the command of Israel, his character and book, 5, 6. His miraculous passage over Jordan, 7,—9. Circumcises the people; keeps the passover, 11. Takes Jericho and Ai, 13, 14. Of the sun standing still. Conquers the northern Canaan. Remarks on the conquest, 20, 21. Divides the land, 24. His farewell sermons to Israel, 29. His death, 30

Josiah, king of Judah, his early piety, 285. Purges our monuments of idolatry, repairs the temple, finds a copy of the law, 288, 289. Is killed at Megiddo; lamentations for him, 293, 294

Jotham reigns well in Judah. Josephus' character of him; his death, 256, 257.

Isaiah, his prophesy, 253

Ishbosheth reigns at Mahanaim, 99. Is murdered, 101

Ishmael kills Gedaliah, 319.

Judges, of the book so named, and office of these judges, 30, 31

Judith, the book so named, proved to be apocryphal 283, 284

K.

Kenites, where settled, 33

Kings, Israel's sin in seeking one, 72,—74. Of the two books of the kings, 132.

Kingdoms founded in the fourth period, 165,—170

L.

Labofardochus, king of Babylon, his tyranny and death, 388

Lamentations of Jeremiah, 317

Levites get no inheritance distinct from the rest of the tribes, and why, 24. Of the Levite's concubine, 37, 38

Letters, when they were brought into Greece by Cadmus, 167. Into Egypt, 168. Into other parts, 169

Lydia, of the ancient kings who reigned there, 168

Magians

M.

- Magians, their sect in the reign of Xerxes, 404
 Manasseh, king of Judah, his wickedness, is said to kill
 Isaiah, 278, 279. Carried captive to Babylon; his re-
 storation and reformation, 280, 281. His death, 285
 Medes revolt from the Assyrians, 276. Their treachery
 to the Scythians 298, 299
 Menahem, son of Gadi, reigns in Samaria, his cruelties,
 255
 Merodach Baladan reigns at Babylon; sends ambassadors
 to Hezekiah, 269, 271
 Micah's idol, 36
 Micah the prophet, 257
 Midianites oppress Israel, 45. Seized with terror, 48

N.

- Nahonadius, king of Babylon, his names and wickedness,
 339. He is slain, 345
 Nabonassar reigns in Babylon, 269
 Nabopolassar takes Babylon and reigns there, 288. Takes
 and destroys Nineveh, 291. His death, 301
 Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, his reign, 197
 Nahum the prophet, 273
 Nebuchadnezzar's marriage, 291. Is partner in the em-
 pire with his father, invades Palestine, 279. Takes Je-
 rusalem, *ibid.* Succeeds his father, 302. Sets up a
 golden image in the plain of Dura, 322. Destroys Tyre,
 over-runs Egypt, adorns Babylon, 326,—328. See Ba-
 bylon. His pride, distraction, restoration and death,
 331, 332
 Neriglissar reigns at Babylon, 333. Makes an alliance a-
 gainst Cyrus; is slain; his character, 337
 Ninveh, Jonah's prophecies against it, 253. Destroyed.
 Prophecies fulfilled, 291
 Noammon destroyed by Sennacherib, 273
 Numbering the people in the reign of David, difficulties
 about it reconciled, 130,—132

O.

- Obadiah, his time and prophesy, 152
 Olympiads, when they began, 256
 Omri reigns in Israel, his wickedness, 199
 Othniel, the son of Kenaz delivers Israel, 35

P.

- Paris, the son of Priam the Trojan, Fables of him 162,—
 164
 Passover kept by Hezekiah, 267. By Josiah 290
 Pekaiah reigns over Israel in Samaria, 255
 Pekah reigns there 257. Is killed, 263
 Perseus, a Fable of him, 159
 Phraortes, king of Media, his life and death, 286
 Phaethon, what his burning was, when it happened, 157
 Phinehas, from him to Eli no high-priest, 64
 Philistines oppress Israel, are routed by Samson, 60.
 Routed in the time of Samuel, 71. By Saul, 78. By
 David, 106. By Hezekiah 269
 Pestilence in the reign of David, 129
 Prophets, a succession of them raised up. Their names
 and characters, 250,—254
 Proverbs of Solomon, of that Book, and when wrote, 180
 Psalms, of the excellency, and penman of that Book, 137,
 138
 Psammus succeeds his father Nechoh, 303. His death,
 310
 Psammiticus expelled Egypt, recovers the kingdom, 282.
 His death, 290
 Pul king of Assyria, 255
 Purim, a Feast of the Jews, rites of the Jews in observing
 it, 414.

R.

- Rachab hides the Spies, 8. Spared at Jericho, 13. When
 married to Salmon, 44, 152
 Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, refuseth to ease the peo-
 ple of taxes, 184. The ten tribes revolt, *ibid.* The re-
 mainder of Rehoboam's life, and his death, 188,—190
 Reuben,

Reuben, Gad, and half tribe of Manasseh serve as auxiliaries in the conquest of Canaan, are rewarded. difference between them and the other tribes compared, 28

Ruth, at what time she lived. Of the book so named, 43

S.

Sabacou the Ethiopian subdues Egypt, 269. Is called So, 273

Sabbatical years, how long neglected, 358

Salmaneser king of Assyria carries the ten tribes into captivity, 264. Subdues Moab, 269. His war against Tyre, and death, 270.

Samaria purchased from Shamer, 199

Samaritans obstruct the building of the second temple, 382.

Why they opposed the Jews, 393

Samson, his conception and birth. The sacred history concerning his life and death explained, 58,—63

Samuel, of the sacred books so named, 41, 97

Samuel the prophet, his conception, birth, life and actions, 64,—72. His speech before he resigned the government, 75. He instructs the prophets, 79. His death, 91

Saolduchæus, king of Babylon, 283.

Saul elected and anointed king of Israel, 73. He defeats the Ammonites, and relieves Jabesh-Gilead, 75. His victories, 77,—80. An evil spirit troubles him, 80, 81. He persecutes David, 84. His death, 97

Sennacherib, his war against Hezekiah, 270. His army destroyed, 275. His death, 276

Serpent, Hezekiah breaks the brazen one to pieces, 268.

Septuagint version, error of, 88

Sethosis, king of Egypt, 160

Seventy weeks, or the prediction, Dan. ix. 24,—27. explained, 414

Seyechus, or Sethon, king of Egypt, 277

Shallum kills Zechariah; reigns in his stead, 254

Shamgar delivers Israel, 41

Sheba, queen of, visits Solomon, where she reigned, 181

Shebua

Shebna removed, Eliakim put in his room, 281.
 Shemei curses David, 117. Is punished by Solomon, 143
 Shishak fights against Jerusalem; who he was, 189, 190
 Sidonians fly by sea to seek new seats, plant colonies, 167
 Smerdis the Magian usurps the crown of Persia; is killed,
 382, 383

Solomon the son of David, his birth, 113. Proclaimed
 king, 134. Cuts off his enemies, marries Pharaoh's
 daughter, 143. His wisdom, wealth and prosperity,
 145. His bargain with Hiram, 148. He builds the
 temple, 170. His prayer at the consecration. Builds
 his own houses, 174,—178. Builds cities, trades to O-
 phir, 178, 179. His honour darkened. His death,
 182,—184.

Song of Solomon, when penned, 181

Sun stands still in the days of Joshua, a miracle, 18

T

Tabeal (son of) who he was, 259

Table for shew-bread in the temple, 172

Tamar ravished, 113

Tatnai and Sethar-boznai, their conduct, 386, &c.

Temple at Jerusalem described, 170. What was signified
 by it, 173. Finished and dedicated by Solomon, 175.
 Repaired by Joash and Jehoiada, 242. Ahaz cuts the
 vessels of the temple in pieces, 261. Temple repaired
 by Josiah, 288. Burnt by order of Nebuchadnezzar,
 316. Cyrus orders to rebuild it, and restores the vessels
 thereof, 353. What was wanting in the second temple
 that was in the first, 364,—372. The building retard-
 ed, 373. The work carried on, finished and dedicated,
 392.

Ten tribes carried captive, 264

Tiglath Pileser, king of Assyria, kills Rezin, takes Damas-
 cus, 261. His death, 262.

Tirhaka, king of Ethiopia, succeeds Sevechus in Egypt,
 277. His death, 279.

Tobit, the book so called, proved not to be canonical, 291,
 292.

Trojan

Trojan war, when they happened, 162. The sum of the story of the captains on both sides, 163. When the Trojan kings reigned, 166.

Tyre, the daughter of Zidon, when built, 167. Their records, their friendship with Solomon, 147. The reward given to Hiram of Tyre, 177. Ezekiel's prophecies against Tyre, 315. Nebuchadnezzar besieges it, 323. Takes it, 326.

U

Ulysses, fables concerning him, 164.

Uriah, a prophet, killed by order of Jehoiakim, 296.

Uzza smitten; why that stroke might be inflicted, 103.

Uzziah, king of Judah, reigns, 247. He invades the priests' office, 249. Earthquake and locusts in his time, 250.

X

Xerxes, king of Persia, ascends the throne, 401. His controversy with Artabanus his brother amicably ended, 402. He confirms the Jews in their privileges, reduceth Egypt, prepares for war against Greece, burns the Grecian temples, pillages these at Babylon, 403. Scripture prophecies fulfilled. He indulgeth himself in ease and vice. Is killed by Artabanus, 405, 406.

Z

Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada, stoned to death. Judgment pursued that sin, 242, 243.

Zachariah reigns over Israel, 254.

Zechariah, the prophet, calls the people to repentance. His other prophecies and sermons, 385,—390.

Zedekiah, king of Judah, his bad reign, 305. His league with Pharaoh-hophra, 311. He is taken and put to death, 316.

Zerubbabel governor of the land after the return of the Jews from the captivity, 352.

Zimri kills Elah, reigns seven days, 199.

Zopyrus his stratagem to take Babylon, 394.

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